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Charity the Form of the Virtues
According to Saint Thomas

BY THE

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Priest of the Congregation of the Mission

A DISSERTATION

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ACCORDING TO SAINT THOMAS**

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**TO MY
MOTHER
AND
FATHER**

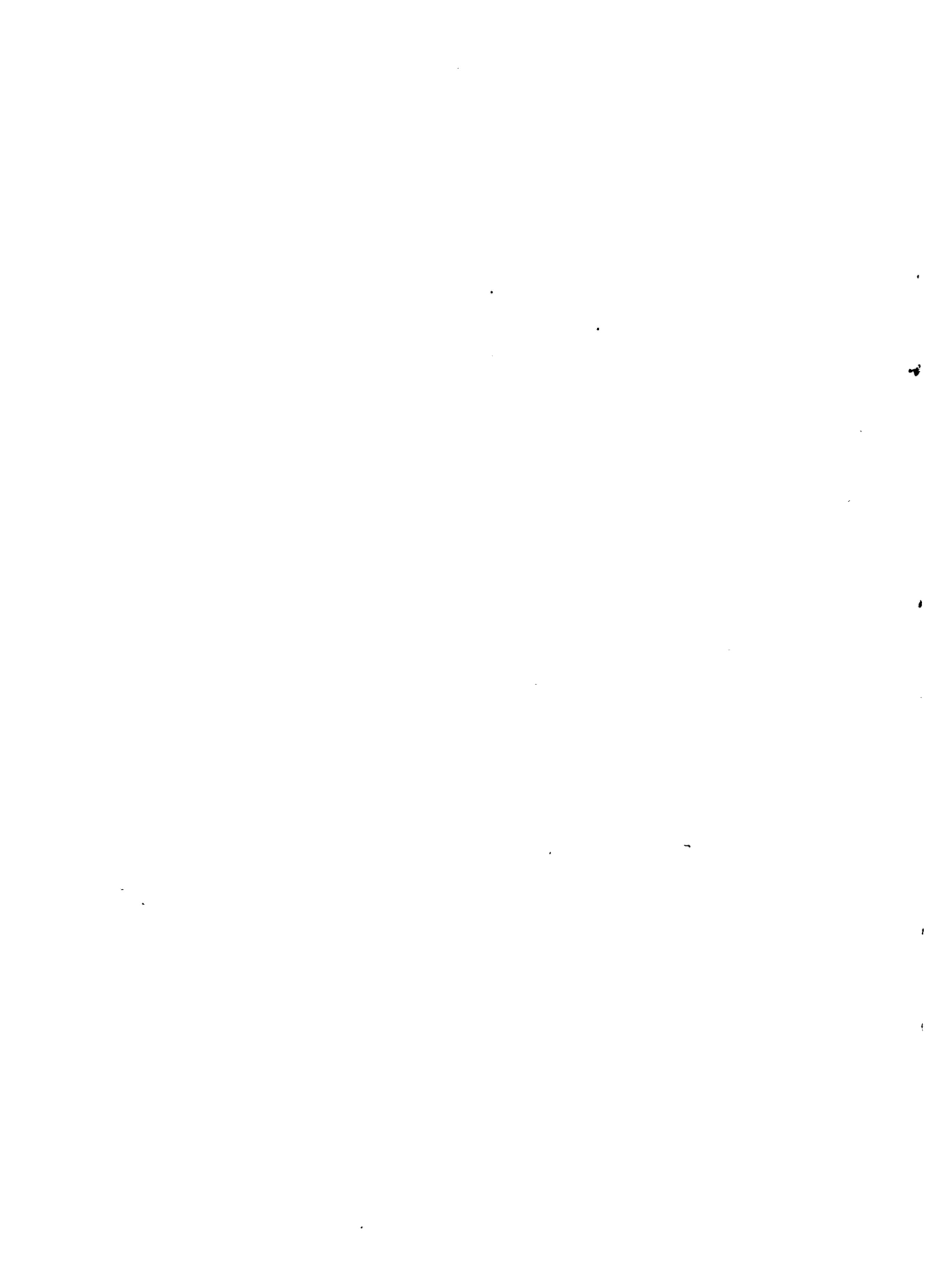


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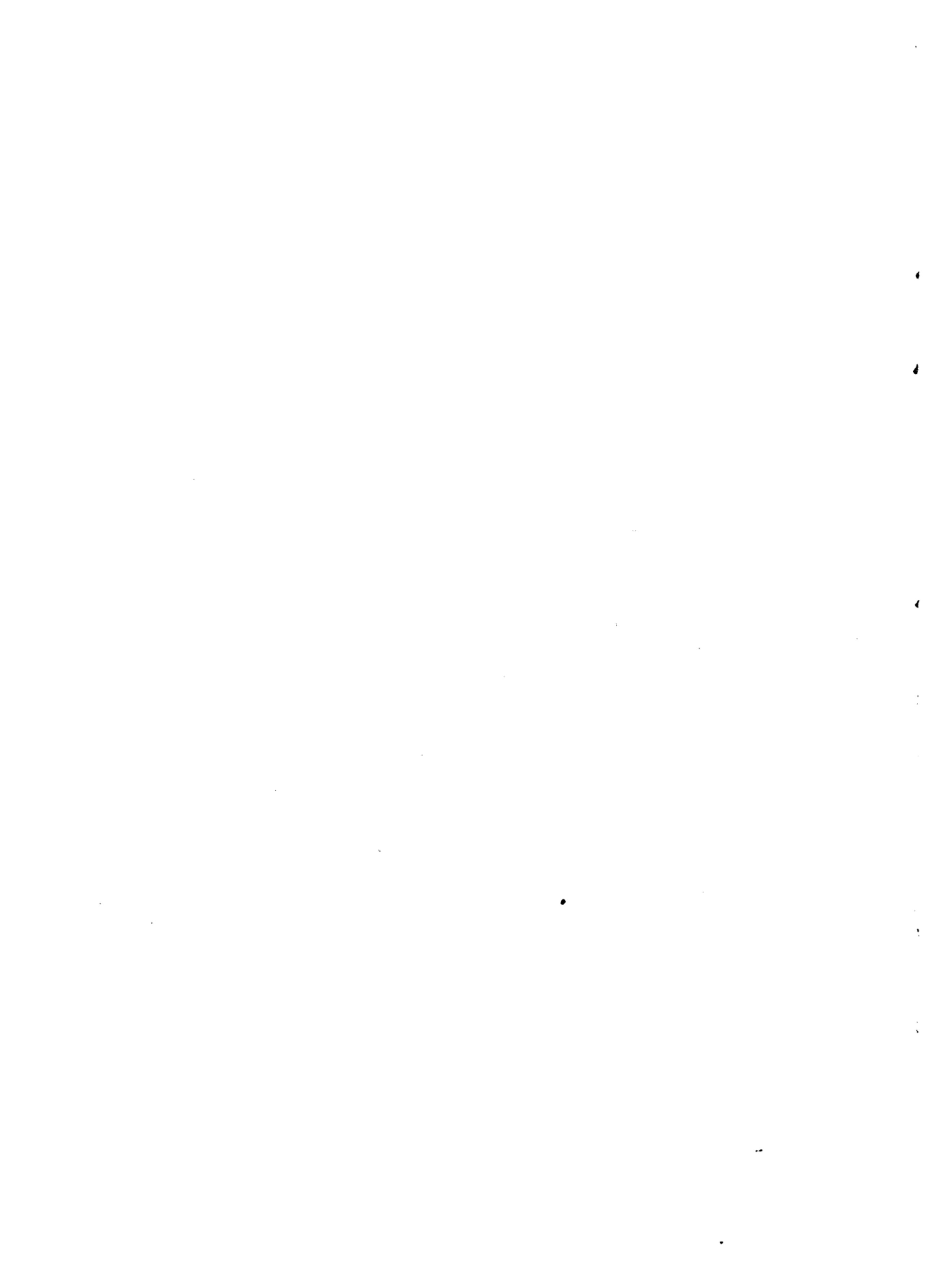
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INTRODUCTION

That charity is the form of the virtues is a truth universally admitted by theologians today. Nor is this surprising, for in Scripture and in the writings of the Fathers the ideas denoted by that phrase, if not the very words themselves, are clearly indicated. To give an exhaustive summary of the teaching of the Scripture, the Fathers, and the theologians preceding St. Thomas is not to our purpose. We shall merely choose some pertinent texts, passages, and writings so as to indicate that the existence of charity as the form of the virtues is a fact solidly grounded in tradition. With this background in mind we shall then discuss St. Thomas' teaching concerning charity as the form of the virtues: its existence, its nature, and its influx into the meritorious act.

I

The more indicative texts concerning charity as the form of the virtues are to be found in the Pauline Epistles.

Epistle to the Corinthians.

If I should speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have charity, I have become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I have prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, yet do not have charity, I am nothing. And if I distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, yet do not have charity, it profits me nothing.¹

Epistle to the Colossians.

Put on therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience. Bear with one another and forgive one another, if anyone has a grievance against any other;

¹ I Cor. 13, 1-3.

even as the Lord has forgiven you, so also do you forgive. But above all else have charity, which is the bond of perfection.²

Epistle to the Ephesians.

For this reason I bend my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom all fatherhood in heaven and earth receives its name, that he may grant you . . . to have Christ dwelling through faith in your hearts; so that, being rooted and grounded in love, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length and height and depth, and to know Christ's love which surpasses knowledge, in order that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.³

Sacred Scripture is very clear in bringing out for us several points: 1) charity is the root and the foundation of the virtues, and the bond of perfection; 2) it is charity which in some way makes the virtues profitable; 3) knowledge, faith, and prophecy may be present without charity, so that charity must be really distinct from them.

II

In the quotations that follow we have attempted to give a representative view of the teaching of the more important Fathers concerning charity as the form of the virtues. While not exhaustive, the texts given are sufficient to show that the teaching they expound is truly indicative of the general belief.

Clement of Rome.

. . . charity unites us to God . . . in charity all the elect of God are perfected; without charity, nothing is accepted by God.⁴

² Colossians 3, 12-15.

³ Ephesians 3, 14-19.

⁴ Clement of Rome, *Epis. ad Cor.* (FB 1, 162: MPG 1, 309): 'Αγάπη κολλᾶ ἡμᾶς τῷ Θεῷ. . . . ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ ἐτελείωσαν πάντες οἱ ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ, δίχα ἀγάπης οὐδὲν εὐάρεστόν ἐστιν τῷ Θεῷ.'

Ambrosiaster.

As long as they do not pursue charity, which is the mother of all good, they do not know as is fitting.⁵

. . . bestow, I beseech you, Lord, that manifold good, . . . charity, which is the foundation of all virtues and good.⁶

In these statements Ambrosiaster teaches that in some way charity is the mother of all good. More particularly in the second quotation he designates it as the foundation of the virtues and of every good.

St. Augustine.

Charity is the proper and unique source of good, to which nothing else communicates [anything].⁷

Charity is an invisible unction which will be a root to him in whom it exists . . .⁸

Who loves rightly, surely rightly believes and hopes; but he who does not love, vainly believes even though what he believes be true; and vainly does he hope, even though the things he hopes for are taught to pertain to true happiness, unless he both believes and hopes for this, that in answer to his petition, it may be given him to love.⁹

⁵ Ambrosiaster, *Commen. in Epis. ad Corinth. Primam* 8, 2 (MPL 17, 226): *Dum enim charitatem, quae mater omnium bonorum est, non secuntur, non sciunt sicut oportet.*

⁶ *Prec. Sec., In prep. ad Missam*, n. 5 (MPL 17, 757): . . . Domine, queso, illud multiforme bonum, . . . charitas scilicet, quae fundamentum est omnium bonorum.

⁷ Augustine, *Ennarrat. in Ps. 103, Serm. 1, n. 9* (MPL 37, 1343): *Caritas est fons proprius et singularis bonorum, cui non communicat alienus.*

⁸ *Super Epist. Joan. tr. 3, n. 12* (MPL 35, 2004): *Unctio invisibilis caritas est, quae in quocumque fuerit, radix illi erit . . .*

⁹ *De Fide, Spe et Caritate* (MPL 40, 286): *Nam qui recte amat, procul dubio recte credit et sperat; qui vero non amat, inaniter credit, etiamsi sint vera quae credit; inaniter sperat, etiamsi ad veram felicitatem doceantur pertinere quae sperat, nisi et hoc credat ac speret, quod sibi petenti donari possit ut amet . . .*

There are given other gifts through the Holy Spirit, but without charity they avail nothing . . . Without charity faith can indeed exist, but it cannot be of any avail.¹⁰

Such is charity that "if it be lacking, all things else are possessed in vain; but if it be present, all is had."¹¹

St. Augustine adds to the teaching of Ambrosiaster two important points. First, he tells us that it is charity that gives value to our actions, even to acts of faith and hope; for without charity they are useless. Secondly, he points out that faith may be had without charity, but lacking charity it is not salutary, unless it be directed to the attainment of charity.

St. Jerome.

Charity is the mother of all the virtues.¹²

. . . And which other among the fruits of the spirit ought to hold the primacy unless it be charity, without which the other virtues are not reckoned as virtues, and out of which all that is good is brought forth?¹³

While he too repeats the teaching of Ambrosiaster and Augustine, St. Jerome, in this last quotation, indicates another characteristic of charity: to it is ascribed the function of making virtues to be truly virtues.

These selected passages from the Fathers indicate the following truths: 1) charity in some way unites us to God; 2) charity is the mother, the root, and the foundation of all the virtues;

¹⁰ *De Trinitate*, (MPL 42, 1082): Dantur et alia per Spiritum Sanctum munera, sed sine caritate nihil prosunt . . . Sine caritate quippe fides potest quidem esse, sed non et prodesse.

¹¹ *In Evang. Joan. tr. 9, n. 8* (MPL 35, 1462): . . . quae si desit, frustra habentur cetera; si autem adsit, habentur omnia.

¹² Jerome, *Epist. 82 Ad Theophilum n. 11* (CSEL 55, 118 Hilberg: MPL 22, 742): Cunctarum virtutum mater est caritas.

¹³ *In Epist. ad Galatas* (MPL 26, 418): . . . Et quae alia inter fructus spiritus debuit tenere primatum nisi caritas, sine qua virtutes ceterae non reputantur esse virtutes, et ex qua nascuntur universa quae bona sunt?

3) without charity other virtues may be had, but they depend in some way on charity that they may be fruitful; 4) it is charity that makes a virtue to be truly a virtue. The exact meaning of this statement will become more evident when we discuss in detail the teaching of St. Thomas.

III

With Peter Lombard we reach a period of development and progress in the theology of charity. It would seem that we owe the phrase *caritas forma virtutum* to the influence of his writings. He does not use this exact wording, however. His precise terminology is: *charity . . . is the mother of all the virtues, which informs them all, and without which there is no true virtue.*¹⁴ In his famous work, *Libri Sententiarum*, Peter Lombard does use the term so familiar to theologians today, *informis*. He says: *Fides igitur, quam daemones et falsi Christiani habent, qualitas mentis est, sed informis, quia sine caritate est.*¹⁵ This is the precise terminology used by theologians in our own time when they speak of the true supernatural virtue of faith existing in a subject after he has lost grace.

Faith by which one believes, if charity be present, is a virtue, for "charity, as St Ambrose says,¹⁶ is the mother of all the virtues," which informs them all, and without which there is no true virtue.¹⁷

Only those works are to be called good which are done through love of God; indeed, this very love is called

¹⁴ Lombard, Peter, *Libri Sententiarum* III, dist. 23, c. 3, p. 656: . . . *caritas . . . mater est omnium virtutum, quae omnes informat, sine qua nulla vera virtus est.*

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, c. 4, p. 657.

¹⁶ Cf. note 5. According to more modern textual criticism, this statement attributed by Lombard to Ambrose, seems rather to be that of Ambrosiaster.

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, III, dist. 23, c. 3, p. 656: *Fides autem qua creditur, si cum caritate sit, virtus est, quia 'caritas, ut ait Ambrosius, mater est omnium virtutum,' quae omnes informat, sine qua nulla vera virtus est.*

the work of faith. Therefore the faith which the demons and false christians have is a quality of the mind, but it is uninformed, because it exists without charity.¹⁸

. . . charity is the cause and mother of all the virtues.¹⁹

. . . without charity they [faith and hope] can exist, although it cannot be a true faith (*fides pia*) or a true hope without charity.²⁰

With this teaching of Peter Lombard, a teaching that mirrors exactly the thought of the Fathers, all theologians are in agreement. A brief consultation of the works of Bonaventure,²¹ Alexander of Hales,²² and Scotus²³ will show that the concept of charity as the form of the virtues was common theological teaching during the century wherein St. Thomas lived and wrote.

Not only did Peter Lombard coordinate the teaching of the Fathers, but, so far as we know, he also proposed the theological problem: how is charity said to be the form of the virtues? Having first examined Thomas' teaching concerning the existence of charity as the form of the virtues, we shall then give the answer of the Angelic Doctor to this question.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, III, c. 4, p. 657: Ea enim sola opera bona dicenda sunt, quae fiunt per dilectionem Dei; ipsa etiam dilectio opus fidei dicitur. Fides igitur, quam daemones et falsi Christiani habent, qualitas mentis est, sed informis, quia sine caritate est.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, III, c. 9, p. 661: . . . caritas enim causa est et mater omnium virtutum.

²⁰ *Op. cit.*, III, dist. 25, c. 5, p. 670: . . . sed illa sine caritate possunt esse, quamvis non sit fides pia vel spes sine caritate.

²¹ Bonaventure, *In III Sent.* dist. 36, a. 1, q. 6; a. 1, q. 3.

²² Alexander of Hales, *Summa Theologica*, Part III, q. 64, m. 3.

²³ Scotus, *In III Sent.* dist. 33, q. 1, n. 21. Cf. *Quodl.* q. 17, n. 8.

CHAPTER I

THE EXISTENCE OF CHARITY AS THE FORM OF THE VIRTUES

ARTICLE I

THE REASONS WHY CHARITY IS TERMED THE FORM

The reasons inducing St. Thomas to speak of charity as the form of the virtues may be reduced to three: 1) because charity perfects the habits of virtue making them to be truly virtues; 2) because charity refers the acts of inferior virtues to its own proper end; 3) because charity makes the acts of the inferior virtues meritorious.

A. Charity Perfects the Habits of Virtue

How charity perfects the inferior habits of virtue is nicely delineated by St. Thomas in the following passage from the *Sunima*.

Virtue is ordered to good . . . However, good is principally the end, for those things which are *ad finem*, are not said to be good unless in order to the end. Therefore, just as there is a twofold end, the one ultimate, and the other proximate, so also there is a twofold good, the one ultimate and universal, and the other proximate and particular. The ultimate and indeed the principal good of man is the enjoyment of God, according to that of the Psalmist 72, 27: *Mihi adhaerere Deo bonum est*; and to this [end] man is ordained through charity.

However, the secondary, and quasi particular good of man can be twofold: the one is truly [objectively] good, and is capable in itself of being referred to the principal good which is the ultimate end; the other is an apparent and not a true good because it leads [one] away from the final good. So therefore it is evident that a simply true virtue is one which is re-

ferred to the principal good of man, even as the Philosopher says in 7 Physic., text 17, that *virtue is the disposition of a perfect [thing] to the best*. And so there cannot be any true virtue without charity.

But if a virtue is considered in so far as it is in order to some particular end, it may be spoken of as some [type] of virtue without charity, in so far as it is ordinated to some particular good . . . But if that particular good is not a true but an apparent good, the virtue which is in order to this good will not be a true virtue, but a false likeness of virtue; . . . But if that particular good be a true good, . . . it will be a true but imperfect virtue unless it be referred to the final and perfect good . . . According to this, there cannot be a simply true virtue without charity.¹

According to St. Thomas, therefore, it would seem that the most fundamental and indispensable requisite for a virtue is that it be referred to some real good, whether particular or universal. With this in mind he gives the following generic definition, capable of embracing within its scope all the grades of perfection

¹ *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q. 23, a. 7, corp: *Virtus ordinatur ad bonum . . . Bonum autem principaliter est finis, nam ea quae sunt ad finem non dicuntur bona nisi in ordine ad finem. Sicut ergo duplex est finis, unus ultimus, et aliis proximus, ita etiam est duplex bonum, unum quidem ultimum et universale, et aliud proximum et particulare. Ultimum quidem et principale bonum hominis est Dei fructus, secundum illud Psal. 72, 27: Mihi adhaerere Deo bonum est; et ad hoc ordinatur homo per charitatem.*

*Bonum autem secundarium, et quasi particulare hominis potest esse duplex: unum quidem quod est vere bonum, utpote ordinabile, quantum est in se, ad principale bonum, quod est ultimus finis; aliud autem est bonum apparen, et non verum, quia abducit a finali bono. Sic ergo patet quod virtus vera simpliciter est illa quae ordinatur ad principale bonum hominis, sicut etiam Philosophus in 7 Physic., text. 17, dicit quod *virtus est dispositio perfecti ad optimum*. Et sic nulla vera virtus potest esse sine charitate.*

Sed si accipiatur virtus secundum quod est in ordine ad aliquem finem particularem, potest aliqua virtus dici sine charitate, in quantum ordinatur ad aliquod particulare bonum . . . Si vero illud bonum particulare sit verum bonum, . . . erit quidem vera virtus, sed imperfecta, nisi referatur ad finale et perfectum bonum. Et secundum hoc simpliciter vera virtus sine charitate esse non potest.

possible to virtue: *Virtus humana, quae est habitus operativus, est bonus habitus, et boni operativus.*² And since things are not said to be good save in so far as they are ordinated to an end, the good to which virtue is ordinated is the end.³

Now just as there is a twofold end, the one proximate, the other ultimate, so there must be a twofold good, the one proximate and the other ultimate. And since the end is the good to which virtue is ordinated, it must be that a virtue can be ordinated to a twofold end, either proximate or ultimate. Objectively, the ultimate and principal end or good of man is the enjoyment of God.⁴ That habit which has all that is required to attain the ultimate and principal end or good, which is objectively the fruition of God, is called by St. Thomas *virtus vera simpliciter*,⁵ for it is truly the *dispositio perfecti ad optimum* demanded by Aristotle.⁶

However, as St. Thomas has said, a habit can also be ordinated to a proximate good or end. In contradistinction to the ultimate and principal good or end, this proximate good is particular and secondary.⁷ If a habit is ordinated to a particular and secondary good or end which is objectively good, the Angelic Doctor terms it a *virtus vera sed imperfecta*.⁸ Such a true but imperfect virtue can exist without charity.⁹

From this teaching of the Angelic Doctor we may deduce the

² *I-II*, q. 56, a. 3, corp. in fine.

³ *II-II*, q. 23, a. 7, corp. in princ.: . . . nam ea quae sunt ad finem, non dicuntur bona, nisi in ordine ad finem.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, q. 23, a. 7, corp: Ultimum quidem et principale bonum hominis est Dei fruitio. Cf. *I-II*, q. 3, a. 8, corp: Ultima et perfecta beatitudo non potest esse nisi in visione divinae essentiae.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, l. c.: Sic ergo patet quod virtus vera simpliciter est illa quae ordinatur ad principale bonum hominis.

⁶ Aristotle, *7 Physic, text. 17*: Virtus est dispositio perfecti ad optimum. Cited by St. Thomas in *II-II*, q. 23, a. 7, corp in med.

⁷ *Summa Theologica*, *II-II*, q. 23, a. 7, corp: Bonum autem secundarium, et quasi particulare hominis potest esse duplex: . . .

⁸ *Op. cit. l. c., in fine*: Si vero illud bonum particulare sit verum bonum, . . . erit quidem vera virtus, sed imperfecta.

⁹ *Op. cit., l. c., in med*: Sed si accipiatur virtus secundum quod est in ordine ad aliquem finem particularem, potest aliqua virtus dici sine charitate, in quantum ordinatur ad aliquod particulare bonum.

following definitions: 1) a true virtue is a habit ordained to an end which is objectively good; 2) a true but imperfect virtue is a habit ordained to a particular or secondary end which is objectively good, and the habit is of such a nature that it can exist without charity; 3) a simply true virtue is a habit ordained to the ultimate and principal objective good which is the enjoyment of God, and is of such a nature that it cannot exist without charity.

Obviously, the *virtus vera imperfecta* and the *virtus simpliciter vera* are both truly virtues according to St. Thomas, because both are ordained to good which is the end. They differ in this that one is more perfect than the other. The *virtus vera simpliciter* is the more perfect virtue because it is ordained to the ultimate and principal, and hence more perfect, good or end. And the Angelic Doctor is unequivocal in stating that it is charity which makes a virtue simply true.

The ultimate and indeed the principal good of man is the enjoyment of God, . . . and to this end man is ordained through charity.¹⁰

So therefore it is evident that a simply true virtue is one which is referred to the principal good of man, . . . And so there cannot be any [simply] true virtue without charity.¹¹

But if that particular good be a true good, . . . it will be a true but imperfect virtue unless it be referred to the final and perfect good . . . According to this, there cannot be a simply true virtue without charity.¹²

According to St. Thomas, therefore, a virtue is said to be simply true or perfect because it is ordained to the ultimate end

¹⁰ *Op. cit., l. c., in princ:* Ultimum quidem et principale bonum hominis est Dei fruitio, . . . ; et ad hoc ordinatur homo per charitatem.

¹¹ *Op. cit., l. c.:* Sic ergo patet quod virtus vera simpliciter est illa quae ordinatur ad principale bonum hominis, . . . Et sic nulla vera virtus potest esse sine charitate.

¹² *Op. cit., l. c., in med:* Si vero illud bonum particulare sit verum bonum, . . . erit quidem vera virtus, sed imperfecta. nisi referatur ad finale et perfectum bonum. —Et secundum hoc simpliciter vera virtus sine charitate esse non potest.

which is the enjoyment of God. And this ordination to the ultimate end is expressly attributed to charity in such wise that if it be lacking, there cannot be a virtue which is simply true or perfect. The perfection conferred upon the habits of virtue by charity is then *ordination to the ultimate and principal end*, the enjoyment of God. In this sense is charity said to inform the habits of virtue, and for this reason it is called the form of the virtues.

The information of the habits of virtue is specifically mentioned in the treatise *De Veritate*.

When the superior power is perfect, from its perfection there is left some perfection in the inferior [power]; and so, since charity is in the will, its perfection, in some manner, redounds into the intellect; so that charity informs not only the act of faith, but faith itself.¹⁸

Although St. Thomas here refers directly to faith, we must not restrict the information of the habits of virtue to the habit of faith. What he teaches with respect to faith may be applied to all the virtues, for charity is said to inform the virtues in that it ordinates them to the ultimate end. And since all the habits of virtue which are simply true virtues are said to be ordained to the ultimate end, charity must be the form of all the habits of virtue which are simply true or perfect virtues.

We may conclude then that the first reason why St. Thomas speaks of charity as the form of the virtues is that in some manner charity perfects the habits of virtue by ordaining them to the ultimate and principal end, thus constituting them virtues which are simply true, or perfect.

B. Charity Perfects the Acts of Virtue

We have seen that charity is called the form of the virtues

¹⁸ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 9: Quando superior vis perfecta est, ex ejus perfectione relinquitur aliqua perfectio in inferiori; et sic, cum caritas est in voluntate, ejus perfectio aliquo modo redundat in intellectum: et sic caritas non solum actum fidei, sed ipsam fidem informat.

because it perfects the very habits of virtue in that it ordinates them to the ultimate and principal end. There is a second and more important reason for so designating charity; it also informs or perfects the very acts of the virtues by referring these acts to its own proper end which is the *finis ultimus*. In treating of this matter, the Angelic Doctor is very clear.

Now it is evident that through charity the acts of all the other virtues are referred to the ultimate end; and in this way it gives its form to all the other virtues; for the virtues themselves are said to be in order to informed acts.¹⁴

Charity is the form of the virtues *ex parte actus* in so far as it draws all the acts of the virtues to its own proper end, for its object is the ultimate end.¹⁵

There can be no doubt about the meaning of these passages. Charity is called the form of the virtues because it refers their acts to the ultimate end. In discussing this point St. Thomas gives the following explanation of his view. First of all, he carefully elaborates the philosophical basis of his position.

Charity is the form, motor, and root of the virtues. To show this, it must be realized that we must judge of habits according to acts; hence, when that which belongs to one habit becomes, as it were, formal in the act of another habit, it is necessary that one habit should be as the form to the other. However, in all voluntary acts that which is *ex parte finis*, is formal. This is so because each act receives form and species according to the form of the agent . . . But the form of the will is its object, which is *bonum* and *finis*, just as the intelligible is the form of the intellect; hence,

¹⁴ *II-II*, q. 23, a. 8, corp: *Manifestum est autem . . . quod per charitatem ordinantur actus omnium aliarum virtutum ad ultimum finem; et secundum hoc ipsa dat formam actibus omnium aliarum virtutum; et pro tanto dicitur esse forma virtutum; nam et ipsae virtutes dicuntur in ordine ad actus formatos.*

¹⁵ *In II Sent. dist. 26, q. 1, a. 5, ad 5: . . . Charitas enim est forma virtutum ex parte actus, inquantum scilicet omnes actus virtutum in suum finem convocat, eo quod ejus objectum est finis ultimus.*

it is necessary that whatever is *ex parte finis* be formal in the act of the will; whence specifically the same act, according as it is ordained to one end comes under the form of virtue, and according as it is ordained to another end, comes under the form of vice; as is evident in the case of one who gives alms for the sake of God, or because of vainglory. So too, the act of one vice, according as it is ordained to the end of another vice, receives its form; as when one steals that he may fornicate; materially [the act] is theft, but formally it is intemperance.¹⁶

It would seem that in this passage St. Thomas is using the term *formal* in the same way as moralists today speak of the material and formal object of a moral act. Both are using the term analogously, the source of the analogy being matter and form as the constituent elements of a composite substance. Hence the formal element is that which gives the form to the moral act; the material element is, as it were, the substratum specified and vivified by the formal element of the moral act. The material and the formal element together constitute the one moral act. With this in mind, let us see how that which is formal in one act can become formal also in another act.

Now each act receives its form and species from the agent.¹⁷ Where there is question of voluntary acts, the formal element

¹⁶ *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, corp: *Caritas est forma virtutum, motor et radix. Ad cuius evidentiam sciendum est, quod de habitibus oportet nos secundum actus judicare; unde quando id quod est unius habitus, est ut formale in actu alterius habitus, oportet quod unus habitus se habeat ad aliud ut forma.* In omnibus autem actibus voluntariis id quod est *ex parte finis*, est formale: quod ideo est, quia unusquisque actus formam et speciem recipit secundum formam agentis, . . . *Forma autem voluntatis est objectum ipsius, quod est bonum et finis, sicut intelligibile est forma intellectus;* unde oportet quod id quod est *ex parte finis*, sit formale in actu voluntatis; unde idem specie actus, secundum quod ordinatur ad unum finem, cadit sub forma virtutis; et secundum quod ordinatur ad aliud finem, cadit sub forma vitii; ut patet de eo qui dat eleemosynam vel propter Deum, vel propter inanem gloriam. *Actus enim unius vitii, secundum quod ordinatur ad finem alterius vitii, recipit formam ejus;* utpote qui furatur ut fornicetur, materialiter quidem fur est, formaliter vero intemperatus.

¹⁷ *Op. cit., l. c. Quotation ut supra.*

is derived from the end, and in the case of the will its form is its object which is *bonum et finis*. Hence, whenever an act is performed because of the end, the end will be the formal element in the act.¹⁸ When there is a question of an end which is sought for itself, *velle*,¹⁹ the matter is simple. Someone makes an act of the love of God. The material element, (*id circa quod*), of the moral act is God Himself. The formal element is drawn from the end of the act which is God loved for His own sake. Such an act receives its form and species as an act of charity from the object of the will—the goodness of God.

However, where there is question of seeking an end as a means to a further end, the matter is slightly more involved. In the example given by St. Thomas a man steals in order that he may commit adultery. Now how does the specific vice of theft become formally the vice of adultery? The Angelic Doctor says that this is effected in that when the act of one vice is ordained to the end of another vice, this action receives the form of the vice to which it is ordained. Therefore when a man steals in order that he may commit adultery, the action is *materially* one of theft, but *formally* one of adultery.²⁰ But this reply, so simple and adequate in itself, needs further explanation by reason of its very succinctness.

An act is human in so far as it is the effect of a deliberate act of the will.²¹ Now in a voluntary act there may be found a twofold act; the interior act of the will and the exterior act.²²

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, l. c. Quotation *ut supra*.

¹⁹ *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 14, corp: . . . Motus enim voluntatis in finem non dicitur absolute intentio, sed simpliciter *velle*.

* ²⁰ *I-II*, q. 18, a. 6, corp in fine: Et ideo actus humani species formaliter consideratur secundum finem, materialiter autem secundum objectum exterioris actus. Unde . . . ille qui furatur ut committat adulterium, est per se loquendo magis adulter quam fur. Cf. *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, corp. in fine: Actus enim unius vitii, secundum quod ordinatur ad finem alterius vitii, recipit formam ejus; utpote qui furatur ut fornicetur, materialiter quidem fur est, formaliter vero intemperatus.

²¹ *I-II*, q. 18, a. 6, corp. in princ: Aliqui actus dicuntur *humani*, in quantum sunt voluntarii. Cf. *I-II*, q. 1, a. 1, corp in med: Illae ergo actiones proprie *humanae* dicuntur quae ex voluntate deliberata procedunt.

²² *Op. cit.*, l. c.: In actu autem voluntario invenitur *duplex* actus, scilicet actus *interior* voluntatis, et actus *exterior*.

The proper object of the interior act of the will is the *finis*; the proper object of the exterior act is that with which the exterior act is concerned.²³ The exterior act is specified by the object *circa quod est*; the interior act is specified by the end as by its proper object.²⁴

From what has been said it follows that there are two distinct norms for judging the specific morality of the one moral act. The one norm is the object of the exterior act of the will; the other is the object of the interior act of the will, or the end intended. Obviously, when the object of the exterior act of the will is not the same as the object of the interior act of the will, the same moral act will have two specific moralities. In the example we have been discussing, the object of the exterior act of the will is theft; the object of the interior act of the will is adultery. Hence, in the one moral act we find two specific moralities, theft and adultery, arising from two disparate norms of morality. Such an act is theft by reason of the exterior act of the will and adultery by reason of the object of the interior act of the will. St. Thomas phrases the matter well:

The object of the exterior act can have reference to the end of the will in a twofold manner: —in one way as being *per se* ordained to the end [of the interior act of the will], as to fight well is *per se* ordained to victory; —in another way *per accidens*, as to receive another's goods is *per accidens* ordained to giving alms. However, it is necessary . . . that the differences dividing some genus and constituting a species of that genus, should divide it [the genus] *per se*. If, however, [the difference] divides [the genus] *per accidens*, the division is not made correctly . . . So therefore, when an object is not *per se* ordained to the end [of the interior act of the will] the specific difference drawn from the object [of the exterior act] is not *per se* determinative of that which is from the end [of the interior act], nor *e converso*. As a result, the one

²³ *Op. cit.*, l. c.: Finis autem proprio est objectum interioris actus voluntarii; id autem circa quod est actio exterior, est objectum ejus.

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, l. c.: Sicut igitur actus exterior accipit speciem ab objecto circa quod est, ita actus interior voluntatis, accipit speciem a fine sicut a proprio objecto.

species does not come under the other; but in such a case the [one] moral act comes under two quasi disparate species. Therefore we say that he who steals in order that he may commit adultery, commits two evils by one act.²⁵

It is evident therefore that the specific malice of theft is not contained under the specific malice of adultery as a *species under a genus*, since theft is not *per se* ordained to adultery. The theft and the adultery are two distinct evils, specified by two distinct objects. Yet St. Thomas insists that these two specifically distinct evils, the theft specified by the object of the exterior act of the will, and adultery specified by the object of the interior act of the will, are nonetheless due to one moral act which is formally adultery.

When many specifically distinct acts are ordered to one end, there is diversity of species by reason of the exterior acts, but there is unity of species by reason of the interior act.²⁶

These two distinct evils of theft and adultery can both be united under the one formal species of adultery precisely because theft is not wished as the end of the interior act of the will, but is only intended as a means to the end. In relation to the end wished by the will, the physical act of theft is the instrument for

²⁵ *I-II*, q. 18, a. 7, corp: *Objectum exterioris actus dupliciter potest se habere ad finem voluntatis: —uno modo sicut per se ordinatum ad ipsum, sicut bene pugnare per se ordinatur ad victoriam; —alio modo per accidens, sicut accipere rem alienam per accidens ordinatur ad dandum eleemosynam.* Oportet autem, . . . quod differentiae dividentes aliquod genus, et constituentes speciem illius generis, per se dividant illud; si autem per accidens, non recte procedit divisio . . . Sic igitur quando objectum non est per se ordinatum ad finem, differentia specifica quae est ex objecto, non est per se determinativa ejus quae est ex fine, nec e converso. Unde una istarum specierum non est sub alia; sed tunc actus moralis est sub duabus speciebus quasi disparatis. Unde dicimus quod ille qui furatur ut moechetur, committit duas malitias in uno actu.

²⁶ *I-II*, q. 18, a. 6, ad 3: *Quando multi actus specie differentes ordinantur ad unum finem, est quidem diversitas speciei ex parte exteriorum actuum, sed unitas speciei ex parte actus interioris.*

the attainment of the end. Since the end wished is adultery and not theft which is only intended as a means to the end, and since the formality of the moral act is drawn from the end of the interior act, it follows that the moral act which embraces theft as the means intended and adultery as the end wished, is formally an act of adultery, and only materially an act of theft in so far as the physical act of theft, the instrument intended by the will in pursuit of its end, is specified by its object as theft. St. Thomas summarizes the matter with his customary clarity:

What is from the will is formal with respect to that which is from the exterior act, for the will uses its members for acting like instruments, nor do external actions have any morality except in so far as they are voluntary. Therefore the species of human acts is formally considered according to the end, but materially according to the object of the exterior act. Hence, the Philosopher says in 5 Ethic., cap. 2, post princ., that *he who steals in order to commit adultery is more of an adulterer than a thief.*²⁷

However, when the objects are ordered to the end *per se* and not merely *per accidens*, then one species of acts does come under another species formally, but as the less universal under the more universal, so that the formality received from the more universal end is generic, and does not in any way destroy the formality received from the particular object and end. Thus St. Thomas says:

. . . But if the object is *per se* ordered to the end, one of the afore-mentioned differences is *per se* determinative of the other. Hence, one of these species will be contained under the other.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, corp. in fine: Id autem quod est ex parte voluntatis, se habet ut formale ad id quod est ex parte exterioris actus, quia voluntas utitur membris ad agendum sicut instrumentis, neque actus exteriores habent rationem moralitatis, nisi in quantum sunt voluntarii. Et ideo actus humani species formaliter consideratur secundum finem, materialiter autem secundum objectum exterioris actus. Unde Philosophus dicit in 5 Ethic., cap. 2, post princ., quod *ille qui furatur ut committat adulterium, est per se loquendo magis adulter quam fur.*

. . . First it must be considered that the more some difference is drawn from a more particular form, so much more is it specific . . . Secondly, the more universal the agent, the more universal the form derived from it . . . Thirdly, the more posterior some end is, the more does it correspond to the more universal agent; just as victory which is the ultimate end of an army is the end intended by the supreme commander; but the ordering of this or that line of battle is the end intended by some one of the inferior officers. From this it follows that the specific difference which is from the end is more general, and the difference which is from the object *per se* ordered to such an end, is specific with respect to it. The will, whose proper object is the end, is the universal motor with respect to all the potencies of the soul whose proper objects are the objects of particular acts.²⁸

Now the Angelic Doctor seems to teach that the acts of the virtues are *per se* ordered to the end of charity, because its object is the *Summum Bonum* towards which they tend.

Now it is evident that the acts of all the other virtues are ordinated to the end proper to charity whose object is the *Summum Bonum*. In the case of the moral virtues this is evident, for these virtues center about some created goods which are ordinated to the uncreated good as to the ultimate end. In the case of the theological virtues it is equally manifest. For in

²⁸ *I-II*, q. 18, a. 7 in med: . . . Si vero objectum per se ordinetur ad finem, una dictarum differentiarum est per se determinativa alterius: unde una istarum specierum continebitur sub altera.

Primo considerandum est quod quanto aliqua differentia sumitur a forma magis particulari, tanto magis est specifica. — Secundo, quod quanto agens est magis universale, tanto ex eo est forma magis universalis. — Tertio, quod quanto aliquis finis est posterior, tanto respondet agenti universaliori: sicut victoria, quae est ultimus finis exercitus, est finis intentus a summo duce; ordinatio autem hujus aciei vel illius est finis intentus ab aliquo inferiorum ducum. Et ex ipsis sequitur quod differentia quae est ex objecto per se ad talem finem ordinato, est specifica respectu ejus. Voluntas enim, cuius proprium objectum est finis, est universale motivum respectu omnium potentiarum animae, quarum propria objecta sunt objecta particularium actuum.

the case of faith, the object is *Ens Increatum* in so far as it is true; and in so far as it is desirable it has the *ratio* of goodness, so that faith tends toward it in so far as it is appetible, since no one believes unless he be willing to believe; and he cannot will something except under the aspect of good. Hope has for its object *Ens Increatum* in so far as it is good, but dependently on the object of charity. The object of hope is good in so far as it is desirable and attainable; for no one desires any good unless he loves that good.²⁹

Therefore, since the acts of these particular virtues are *per se* ordered to the end of charity, but are actually moved to attain that end from the command of charity, what is properly formal to the habit of charity becomes formal in a *more general manner* in the acts of the moral and theological virtues which retain their specific and proper formality derived from their proper and particular objects and ends. Because it bestows this more general form on the acts of the particular virtues, charity must be termed the form of the virtues.

That charity does bestow this formality on the acts of the virtues, and to this extent at least is termed the form of the virtues, is the evident teaching of St. Thomas:

Whence it becomes evident that in the acts of all the virtues what is formal comes from charity; and for this reason it is said to be the form of the virtues,

²⁹ *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, corp: Manifestum est autem quod actus omnium aliarum virtutum ordinatur ad finem proprium caritatis, quod est ejus objectum, scilicet summum bonum. Et de virtutibus quidem moralibus manifestum est: nam hujusmodi virtutes sunt circa quaedam bona creata quae ordinantur ad bonum increatum sicut ad ultimum finem. Sed de virtutibus aliis theologicis idem manifestum est: nam ens increatum est quidem objectum fidei, ut verum; et inquantum est appetibile, habet rationem boni; et sic tendit fides in ipsum, inquantum est appetibile; cum nullus credat nisi volens; spei autem objectum licet sit ens increatum, inquantum est bonum, tamen dependet ab objecto caritatis; est enim bonum, objectum spei inquantum est desiderabile et consequibile: nullus enim desiderat consequi aliquod bonum nisi per hoc quod amat ipsum.

namely, in so far as all the acts of all the virtues are ordained to the *Summum Bonum* which is loved.³⁰

In the *Summa* much the same teaching is found. We give it here for greater clarity.

In moral matters, the form of the act is drawn principally from the end. The reason is that the principle of moral acts is the will, whose object and quasi form is the end. The form of the act always follows the form of the agent. Therefore it is necessary that in moral matters that that which gives the act ordination to the end, should also give it its form.

Now it is evident . . . that through charity the acts of all the other virtues are ordained to the ultimate end; therefore it [charity] gives the form to the acts of all the other virtues; and for this reason it is said to be the form of the virtues; for the virtues themselves are said to be in order to informed acts.³¹

We may conclude then that the second reason why St. Thomas speaks of charity as the form of the virtues is that through the intention of its own end, charity ordinates the acts of the other virtues to its proper end, the *finis ultimus*, thus making these acts of inferior virtues to be formally acts of charity, while they

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, l. c., in fine: *Unde manifestum est quod in actibus omnium virtutum est formale id quod est ex parte caritatis; et pro tanto dicitur forma omnium virtutum, inquantum scilicet omnes actus omnium virtutum ordinantur in summum bonum amatum.*

³¹ *II-II*, q. 23, a. 8, corp: *In moralibus forma actus attenditur principaliter ex parte finis. Cujus ratio est quia principium moralium actuum est voluntas; cuius objectum et quasi forma est finis. Semper autem forma actus consequitur formam agentis. Unde oportet quod in moralibus id quod dat actui ordinem ad finem, det ei et formam.*

Manifestum est autem . . . quod per charitatem ordinantur actus omnium aliarum virtutum ad ultimum finem; et secundum hoc ipsa dat formam actibus omnium aliarum virtutum; et pro tanto dicitur esse forma virtutum; nam et ipsae virtutes dicuntur in ordine ad actus formatos.

remain the acts of the particular virtue specified by its proper object.⁸²

Further, since St. Thomas says we must judge of habits according to acts, and since the *finis ultimus* which belongs properly to the habit of charity becomes formal in the acts of the other virtues ordinated to the ultimate end by intention of that end, it follows that here we have another reason for speaking of the very *habit* of charity as the form of the virtues. However, this is done only reductively. For it is the intention of the end that ordinates an act of the inferior virtues to the ultimate end; not the very habit of charity. Yet the habit of charity may be called the form of the virtues because we judge of habits by their acts. As St. Thomas puts it:

Charity is the form, motor, and root of the virtues. To show this, it must be realized that we must judge of habits according to acts; hence, when that which belongs to one habit becomes, as it were, formal in the act of another habit, it is necessary that one habit should be as the form to the other.⁸³

We are now prepared to inquire into the third reason why the Angelic Doctor speaks of charity as the form of the virtues.

C. Charity Makes the Virtues Capable of Meriting

From what has been said it follows logically that charity is the form of the virtues in that by making them to be *virtutes simpliciter verae*, and by ordinating their acts to the ultimate end, it makes the virtues capable of meriting eternal life. This is,

⁸² *De Virtutibus in Communi*, q. 1, a. 10, ad 10: . . . Ex hoc ergo quod actus temperantiae vel fortitudinis imperantur a caritate ordinanti eos in ultimum finem; ipsi quidem actus formaliter speciem sortiuntur; nam formaliter loquendo fiunt actus caritatis; non tamen ex hoc sequeretur quod temperantia vel fortitudo speciem sortiuntur.

⁸³ *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, corp. in princ: Caritas est forma virtutum, motor et radix. Ad cuius evidentiam sciendum est, quod de habitibus oportet nos secundum actus judicare; unde quando id quod est unius habitus, est ut formale in actu alterius habitus, oportet quod unus habitus se habeat ad alium ut forma.

in fact, the express teaching of St. Thomas who, in his treatise *De Charitate*, has this to say.

From the proper end and the proper object each virtue has a special form through which it is this virtue, but from charity it has some common form, according to which it is meritorious of eternal life.³⁴

In an earlier work, where St. Thomas treats at length the subject of charity as form, we find the same teaching:

Hence, it cannot happen that some habit existing in some potency of the soul should have the nature of a virtue, in the sense of a meritorious virtue about which we are now speaking, except in this way: that in that potency there is some participation of the perfection of the will which charity perfects; and therefore charity is the form of all the virtues.³⁵

So far, we have seen that St. Thomas lists three reasons why he calls charity the form of the virtues. Firstly, because it perfects the very habits of virtue; secondly, because it perfects the acts of virtue; thirdly, because it makes the habits of virtue capable of meriting eternal life. We must now investigate the various types of form predicated of charity.

ARTICLE II

CHARITY AS THE EXEMPLARY, EFFECTIVE, AND CONSTITUTIVE FORM

In his various writings St. Thomas mentions three types of form in connection with charity: the exemplary, effective, and essential or constitutive form.

³⁴ *Op. cit.*, l. o., ad 9: *A proprio fine et a proprio objecto quaelibet virtus habet formam specialem, per quam est haec virtus, sed a caritate habet quamdam formam communem, secundum quam est meritoria vitae aeternae.* Cf. *In III Sent. dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3.*

³⁵ *In III Sent. dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3: . . . Unde non potest esse quod aliquis habitus existens in aliqua potentia animae habeat rationem virtutis loquendo de virtutibus meritoriis, de quibus hic loquimur, nisi secundum hoc quod in illa potentia participatur aliquid de perfectione voluntatis quam caritas perficit.*

A. Charity as the Exemplary Form

At first sight it may seem that St. Thomas contradicted himself in his teaching concerning charity as the exemplary form of the virtues. In his treatise *De Veritate* he says that the habit of charity, since it is not intrinsic to faith, cannot be either its substantial or accidental form, but that in some way it may be spoken of as the exemplary form of the virtues.

The very habit of charity, since it is not intrinsic to faith, cannot be called either its substantial or accidental form. However, in some manner, it may be spoken of as its exemplary form.³⁶

Yet, in the *Summa* he tells us that charity is not the exemplary form of the virtues, but rather the effective form.

Charity is said to be the form of the virtues, not indeed exemplarily or essentially, but rather effectively.³⁷

Are these two statements really contradictory? An examination of the objection to which the Angelic Doctor was replying when he denied that charity is the exemplary form gives us the key to the solution of the difficulty. The objection follows:

It seems that charity is not the form of the virtues. The form of a thing is either exemplary or essential. But charity is not the exemplary form of the other virtues, for then it would be necessary that the other virtues be of the same species as itself.³⁸

³⁶ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 4: *Ipse habitus caritatis cum non sit intrinsecus fidei, non potest dici forma substantialis neque accidentalis ejus; potest autem aliquo modo dici exemplaris forma.*

³⁷ *II-II*, q. 23, a. 8, ad 1: *Charitas dicitur esse forma aliarum virtutum, non quidem exemplariter aut essentialiter, sed magis effective.*

³⁸ *Op. cit.*, l. c., obj. 1: *Videtur quod charitas non sit forma virtutum. Forma enim alicujus rei vel est exemplaris, vel essentialis. Sed charitas non est forma exemplaris aliarum virtutum, quia sic oporteret quod aliae virtutes essent ejusdem speciei cum ipsa.*

Therefore the statement made in the *Summa* must be interpreted as meaning simply that the habit of charity is not the exemplary form of the virtues in such wise that all the virtues are *exact reproductions of charity*. Were this true, it would mean that there is in reality only one virtue—charity. Therefore, St. Thomas insists that charity is not the exemplary form of the virtues in that other virtues are generated in its own likeness, but rather only in so far as they *operate* as does charity.

Charity may be called the exemplary form of the virtues, not because virtues are generated after its likeness; but in so far as they operate after its own manner.³⁹

Consequently the habit of charity is not the exemplary form of the virtues precisely in so far as it is this particular virtue, like faith, or temperance (*virtus vera sed imperfecta*), but only in so far as it is a perfect virtue (*virtus simpliciter vera*).

. . . Charity does not serve as an exemplar for faith precisely in so far as it is faith . . . but only in so far as it is perfect.⁴⁰

The habit of charity cannot be the exemplary form of some particular inferior virtue, like faith or temperance, because each virtue receives its proper and proximate species from its own proper object and end.

. . . from the proper end and the proper object each virtue has a special form through which it is this virtue.⁴¹

³⁹ *De Caritate*, q. 1, a. 3, ad 6: *Caritas potest dici forma exemplaris virtutum, non ad cuius similitudinem virtutes generentur; sed inquantum ad ejus similitudinem quodammodo operantur.* Cf. *In III Sent.* dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3, ad 1. *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 3.

⁴⁰ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 3 in finem: . . . non enim fides exemplatur a caritate secundum illud quod est fides: . . . sed solum secundum quod est perfecta.

⁴¹ *De Caritate*, q. 1, a. 3, ad 9: *A proprio fine et a proprio objecto quaelibet virtus habet formam specialem, per quam est haec virtus.* Cf. *In III Sent.* dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3. *In II Sent.* dist. 38, q. 1, a. 1, ad 3.

Moral acts are not specified by the ultimate end, but by proximate ends.⁴²

Therefore the habit of charity is the exemplary form, not of a particular virtue specified by its proper object and end, but of this virtue made perfect through its ordination to the ultimate end which is proper to charity. Consequently, the habit of charity may be considered the form of the *virtutes simpliciter verae*, but not of the *virtutes verae sed imperfectae*. It is not the form of the true but imperfect virtues because these virtues have their proper form from their proximate object and end. It is the form of the virtues which are simply true because what is perfect in these virtues is derived from charity by participation, so that they can act after the manner of charity, that is, meritoriously. In short, charity is the form of the virtues not materially, but formally considered.

The very habit of charity, since it is not intrinsic to faith, cannot be called either its substantial or accidental form. However, in some manner it may be spoken of as its exemplary form . . . Charity does not serve as an exemplar for faith precisely in so far as it is faith . . . but only in so far as it [faith] is perfect.⁴³

Hence, we may say that the habit of charity is not the exemplary form of the *virtutes verae sed imperfectae*; it is the exemplary form of the *virtutes simpliciter verae*. The two statements are not contradictory.

Nor need we suppose with the Salmanticenses⁴⁴ that the

⁴² *In II Sent.* dist. 38, q. 1, a. 1, ad 3: *Actus morales non specificantur a fine ultimo, sed a finibus proximis.*

⁴³ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad. 4: *Ipse habitus caritatis cum non sit intrinsecus fidei, non potest dici forma substantialis neque accidentalis ejus; potest autem aliquo modo dici exemplaris forma . . . non enim fides exemplatur a caritate secundum illud quod est fides: . . . sed solum secundum quod est perfecta.*

⁴⁴ Collegii Salmanticensis, *Cursus Theologicus Summam Theologicam Angelici Doctoris D. Thoma Complectens*, XII, tr 19 ((*De Charitate Theologica*) disp. 7, dub. 3, n. 43, p. 311: *Alii dicunt, charitatem esse*

Angelic Doctor changed his mind when in the *Summa*⁴⁵ he said that charity is not the exemplary but the effective form of the virtues. For this statement can be readily understood of the habit of charity as the exemplary form of the *virtutes verae sed imperfectae*. And from the context, his reply to the objection already quoted,⁴⁶ this is more evidently his meaning.

We may conclude therefore that the very habit of charity is the exemplary form of the *virtutes simpliciter verae* in that these virtues are capable of acting after the manner proper to charity, that is, meritoriously.

B. Charity as the Effective and Substantial Form

Certainly St. Thomas teaches charity is the effective form of the virtues. However, the authors are not agreed as to whether he maintains that charity is the intrinsic or extrinsic effective form. Since this discussion necessarily involves the possibility of charity as the substantial form, under the same heading, we are obliged to consider charity as both the effective and substantial form.

1. The Existence of Charity as the Effective Form

So far as we know, there is only one text among the writings of the Angelic Doctor which states in explicit terms that charity is the effective form of the virtues. It is found in his latest work, the *Summa Theologica*.

Charity is said to be the form of the other virtues . . . effectively, in so far namely, as it imposes a form on all the virtues.⁴⁷

formam virtutum, quia caeterae virtutes illam imitantur tanquam exemplar. Quod placuit D. Thom. q. 14, de verit. art. 5, ad 3, . . .

Sec hunc dicendi modum corrigere videtur D. Thom. . .

⁴⁵ II-II, q. 23, a. 8, ad 1: Charitas dicitur esse forma aliarum virtutum, non quidem exemplariter aut essentialiter, sed magis effective, in quantum scilicet omnibus formam imponit.

⁴⁶ Op cit., l. c. Cf. the objection in context as well as our reply on pages

⁴⁷ II-II, q. 23, a. 8, ad. 1. Quotation ut supra.

This statement is as vague concerning the nature of charity as the effective form as it is definite concerning its existence. The authors, examining related passages, have arrived at divergent conclusions. Let us examine the solutions offered, and see which best represents the teaching of the Angelic Doctor.

2. The Nature of Charity as the Effective Form

The theologians involved in this discussion readily agree that St. Thomas teaches the existence of charity as the effective form. They are not agreed, however, as to whether the form imposed by charity is intrinsic or extrinsic to the virtues.

Billuart⁴⁸, Van Roey⁴⁹, Merklebach⁵⁰, Hervé⁵¹, Hermann⁵², and others maintain that charity is the extrinsic effective form of the virtues.

Cajetan⁵³, John of St. Thomas⁵⁴, the Salmanticenses⁵⁵, Billot⁵⁶, Zubizarreta⁵⁷, Ferland⁵⁸, and others teach that charity is the intrinsic effective form of the virtues.

⁴⁸ Billuart, F. C. R., *Summa Sancti Thomae*, II, p. 410.

⁴⁹ Van Roey, "De Charitate Forma Virtutum" *Ephemerides Theologicae Louvaniensis*, 1(1924)43sq.

⁵⁰ Merklebach, B., *Summa Theologia Moralis*. I, n. 821, pp. 663-664, Note 1.

⁵¹ Hervé, J. M., *Manuale Theologiae Dogmaticae*, III, n. 356, p. 394.

⁵² Hermann, R. P., *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae*, II, n. 1373, pp. 392-393.

⁵³ Cajetan, Thomas De Vio Cardinal, *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Summa Theologica cum commentariis Thomae De Vio Cardinalis Cajetani*, In II-II, q. 23, a. 8.

⁵⁴ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus*, III, (De Anima) q. 12, a. 6.

⁵⁵ Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, tr. 19 (De Charitate) disp. 7, dub. 3, n. 48, p. 313.

⁵⁶ Billot, Louis, *De Virtutibus Infusis*, th. 32, p. 394.

⁵⁷ Zubizarreta, *Theologia Dogmatico-Scholastica*, III, n. 568, p. 329.

⁵⁸ Ferland, A., *Commentarius in Summam D. Thomae* (De Gratia) p. 324.

Both schools of thought appeal to the Angelic Doctor as the authority for their teaching.

a. The First Opinion

The first argument in favor of the opinion that charity is the extrinsic form of the virtues is particularly well worded by Billuart. It claims that were one to admit that charity is the intrinsic effective form, it would follow that all the virtues would be of the same species as charity.

Charity is not the intrinsic and essential form of the other virtues, otherwise all the virtues would be of the same species.⁵⁹

If, therefore, the form imposed on the virtues by charity is said to be intrinsic to the virtues, it would be constitutive of the very essence of the virtues.⁶⁰ But such a conclusion, the advocates of extrinsic efficacy point out, is clearly against the teaching of St. Thomas. The following texts are indicative of the ones they are accustomed to cite.

Charity is not the form of the virtues which is part

⁵⁹ Billuart, F. C. R., *Op. cit.*, II, Dissert. 2, a. 4, p. 410: *Charitas non est forma intrinsica et essentialis aliarum virtutum, alioquin omnes virtutes essent ejusdem speciei; . . .*

⁶⁰ Van Roey, *op. cit.*, p. 55: . . . illum influxum charitatis pertinere non ad causalitatem essentialiem et intrinsecam . . . sed potius ad causalitatem efficientem. Haec est sine ullo dubio sententio Angelici. Merklebach, *op. cit.*, I, n. 821, Note 1, p. 664: Qualis autem est forma? Non intrinseca seu constitutiva essentiae, nec essentialis; sed extrinseca, effectiva seu motiva, et accidentalis. Hervé, *op. cit.*, III, n. 356, p. 394: Evidem charitas non est forma intrinseca aliarum virtutum eas essentialiter constituendo . . . Hermann, *op. cit.*, II, n. 1373, pp. 392, 393: Caritas dicitur forma virtutum, non quidem intrinseca aut essentialis . . . sed extrinseca et forma quasi informans. Van Noort, G., *Tractatus De Gratia Christi*, n. 179, p. 173: Charitas siquidem non est forma intrinsece constituens reliquos habitus infusos sed forma extrinsece perficiens eos.

of the essence of the virtues . . . but it is the form *quasi informans*.⁶¹

The intrinsic form cannot be the end of a thing, although it may be the end of the generation of a thing. Charity, however, is not the intrinsic form, as has been said; but from this that it draws the other virtues to its own end, it informs the virtues.⁶²

Charity is not said to be the form of faith after the manner in which the form is part of the essence, so that then it would not be able to be distinguished from faith; but in so far as faith attains some perfection from charity, just as in the universal, the superior elements are said to be the form of the inferior.⁶³

The second argument in favor of this opinion is given by Van Roey. If charity were the intrinsic form of the virtues, he says, it would follow that the same virtue could have many intrinsic and essential modalities. But this is surely repugnant. He explains his meaning as follows.

When they say that "the same act can have many intrinsic modes of morality"⁶⁴ I answer by distinguishing. That which is considered as one human act can pertain to many moral species in so far as it is constituted by many entitative acts which have arisen from many virtues subordinated to each other, I con-

⁶¹ *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, ad 16: *Charitas non est forma virtutum quae sit pars essentiae virtutum, . . . sed est forma quasi informans*; . . . Cf. also, *Op. cit.*, loc. cit., ad 1.

⁶² *Op. cit.*, loc. cit., ad 18: *Forma intrinseca non potest esse finis rei, licet sit finis generationis rei. Caritas autem non est forma intrinseca, ut dictum est; sed ex hoc ipso quod trahit alias virtutes ad suum finem, format virtutes, . . .*

⁶³ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 1: *Non dicitur esse forma fidei caritas per modum quo forma est pars essentiae; sic enim contra fidem dividi non posset; sed in quantum aliquam perfectionem fides a caritate consequitur; sicut in universo elementa superiora dicuntur esse ut forma inferiorum.* Cf. *Op. cit.*, loc. cit., ad 3, 4.

⁶⁴ Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, XII, tr. 19 (*De Charitate Theologica*) disp. 7, dub. 3, n. 64, p. 321.

cede; that a good and indivisible act can be intrinsically constituted by many moral modes, I deny. *A fortiori* it must be denied that one and the same virtue can put on at one and the same time diverse essential modalities.⁶⁵

If we understand Van Roey correctly, his position is this. He would concede, for example, that an act of temperance performed out of love for God, in which temperance is sought for itself, and as a means to loving God, is one moral act embodying two distinct physical acts of the will ordered one to the other. In such an act there may be two moral species. However, he would deny that an act of temperance could be intrinsically constituted both an act of temperance and an act of charity. *A fortiori* he denies that the virtue of temperance could be constituted essentially as the virtuous habit of temperance and the virtuous habit of charity.

For the reasons given, these men conclude that charity cannot be the intrinsic and essential form of the virtues. However, they do admit that some entity is conferred upon the virtues by charity. Billuart speaks of it as an ornament in the supernatural order.

. . . but it [charity] is only the extrinsic and accidental form in so far as through it they [the virtues] are referred to the supernatural end by which, as by an ornament, they are formed in the supernatural order.⁶⁶

Van Roey speaks of this entity as a new quasi species which is

⁶⁵ Van Roey, *op. cit.*, p. 59: *Unde, quando dicunt posse 'eundem actum habere plures modos intrinsecos modalitatis' respondeo distinguendo: Quod consideratur ut unus actus humanus, potest pertinere ad plures species morales in quantum constituitur pluribus entitative actibus, ortis ex pluribus virtutibus ad invicem subordinatis, concedo—bonus et indivisibilis actus potest intrinsecice constitui pluribus modis moralibus, nego. A fortiori negandum est, unam eandemque virtutem diversas modalitates essentiales simul induere posse.*

⁶⁶ Billuart, F. C. R., *op. cit.*, loc., cit.; . . . sed forma extrinseca tantum et accidentalis, quatenus per eam referuntur ad finem supernaturalem quo veluti ornamento formantur in ordine supernaturali.

superimposed on the virtues by charity as the effective and extrinsic form, so that the other virtues have by participation from charity, what charity has properly.⁶⁷ Evidently, therefore, for Billuart and Van Roey the form imposed by charity is in no way intrinsic to the virtues, for that would make them essentially the same virtue as charity. The entity or quiddity imposed by charity is extrinsic and accidental to the virtues, so that charity must be called the extrinsic effective form.

While, in a general statement, Merklebach agrees that charity is the extrinsic effective form of the virtues, he is more careful to clarify his position by making certain distinctions. Thus he says charity is not the intrinsic form, constitutive of the very essence of the virtues, but rather the extrinsic, and accidental form in that it gives the ultimate complement of perfection to the virtues.⁶⁸ And by virtue he means a particular virtue specified by its proper object and end (*virtus vera imperfecta*).⁶⁹ For him, therefore, charity is not the intrinsic and constitutive form of the *virtus vera imperfecta*, but its extrinsic and accidental form. He further allows that charity does confer something intrinsic upon the virtues by which they are constituted in "*ratione accidentalis*", in so far as charity imprints upon the acts of the other virtues an ordination by moving the habits of virtue to act.⁷⁰ And this quiddity which is imprinted on the virtues is the passive participation in the very ordination of charity; it is, as it were, *forma constituens actus illos in esse virtuoso simpliciter*.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Van Roey, *op. cit.*, p. 52: . . . Sed est forma potius effectiva et extrinseca, quatenus eis novam quasi speciem superimponit; unde fit, quod virtutes habeant participative a charitate, quod haec habet ratione propria.

⁶⁸ Merklebach, B. H., *op. cit.*, I, n. 861, Note 1, p. 664: . . . sed forma extrinseca, effectiva seu motiva, et accidentalis, utpote tribuens ultimum perfectionis complementum.

⁶⁹ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit.

⁷⁰ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit.: Et tamen quid intrinsecum dat aliis virtutibus, sic eas constituens in *ratione accidentalis*: imponit scilicet, et imprimet ordinem in actibus aliarum virtutum, movendo habitum ad actum.

⁷¹ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit.: Quid imprimet? Respondet Caietanus: Participatio passiva imperii et ordinationis suae est velut *forma constituens actus illos in esse virtuoso simpliciter*.

Merklebach is distinguishing between the *virtus vera imperfecta*, and the *virtus vera simpliciter*. Charity is not the intrinsic and constitutive form of the *virtus vera imperfecta*, but its extrinsic accidental form. The quiddity imposed on the virtues by charity is constitutive of the virtues “*in ratione accidentalī*”, by which he means, in so far as they are perfect virtues (*virtus simpliciter vera*).⁷² Further, this quiddity is constitutive of the virtuous *esse* of the acts of virtue.⁷³ Therefore, for Merklebach charity is indeed the extrinsic effective and accidental form of the virtues already constituted in their proper, proximate species. But in that charity impresses a certain quiddity upon the virtues, perfecting the acts of virtue and the virtues themselves, charity may be termed the intrinsic and constitutive or essential form of the accidental *esse* of a virtue, namely its *perfection* as virtue, and of the accidental perfection of the act of a virtue, namely that it should be a *virtuous* act by which is meant a meritorious act.

The general conclusions of these authors is that according to St. Thomas charity must be termed the common form of all the virtues,⁷⁴ and that it enters into the definition of every virtue only because all the virtues somehow depend on it.⁷⁵

b. The Second Opinion

Few of the theologians who maintain that charity is the intrinsic effective form of the virtues develop their thought concerning this matter. Most are content to cite the following passage from Cajetan.

Not only does charity inform effectively because it commands and ordinates; this is common to everything commanding and ordinating; but because the passive participation of its *imperium* and ordination

⁷² *Op. cit., loc. cit. Quotation ut supra.*

⁷³ *Op. cit., loc. cit. Quotation ut supra.*

⁷⁴ Hervé, J. M., *op. cit.*, III, n. 356, p. 394. Merklebach, B. H., *op. cit., loc. cit.* Van Roey, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

⁷⁵ Cf. *Ut supra.*

is as the form constituting other acts in "*esse virtuoso simpliciter*".⁷⁶

However, John of St. Thomas⁷⁷ and the Salmanticenses⁷⁸ are exceptions. We shall content ourselves here with presenting the arguments advanced by the Salmanticenses, since their treatment of the matter is quite extensive.

After stating explicitly that the inferior virtues and their acts are informed through some real and intrinsic quiddity derived from charity, the Salmanticenses immediately appeal to the Angelic Doctor as authority for their view.

Charity is said to be the form of the other virtues, not indeed exemplarily or essentially, but rather effectively, namely, in so far as it imposes a form on all [the virtues] after the manner described in the body of the article.⁷⁹

Apropos of this text, the Salmanticenses remark that charity would not inform the virtues effectively, nor impose a form on

⁷⁶ Cajetan, Card. Thomas de Vio, *op. cit.*, *In II-II*, q. 23, a. 8: Non solum charitas informat effective, quia imperat, et ordinat; hoc enim commune est omni imperanti, et ordinanti; sed quia participatio passiva imperii, et ordinationis suae est velut forma constituens actus alios in *esse virtuoso simpliciter*. The following authors whom we have consulted quote Cajetan either verbatim, or substantially; some with and some without due acknowledgment. Cf. Merklebach, *op. cit.*, loc. cit. Zubizaretta, V., *Theologia Dogmatico-Scholastica*, III, n. 568, p. 329. Billot, L., *De Virtutibus Infusis*, th. 32, p. 394. Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, XII, tr. 19 (De Charitate Theologica) disp. 7, dub. 3, n. 48, p. 313.

⁷⁷ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus*, III, (De Anima) q. 12, a. 6.

⁷⁸ Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, XII, tr. 19 (De Charitate Theologica) disp. 7, dub. 3: X, tr. 16 (De Merito) disp. 4, dub. 1.

⁷⁹ *II-II*, q. 23, a. 8, ad 1: Charitas dicitur esse forma aliarum virtutum, non quidem exemplariter aut essentialiter, sed magis effective, in quantum scilicet omnibus formam imponit, secundum modum praedictum in corp. articuli. Cf. Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, XII, tr. 19 (De Charitate Theologica) disp. 7, dub. 3, n. 43, p. 311. *Op. cit.*, loc. cit., n. 48, p. 313: Non posset autem charitas formare effective virtutes, neque illis imponere formam, nisi aliquid a charitate descenderet, quod virtutes, et earum actus afficeret.

them unless something would descend from charity which would affect both the virtues and their acts. As St. Thomas says:

When the superior power is perfect, from its perfection there is left some perfection in the inferior [power]; and so, since charity is in the will, its perfection in some manner redounds into the intellect: and so charity not only informs the act of faith, but faith itself.⁸⁰

Here, according to the Salmanticenses, St. Thomas is clearly teaching that something from the will perfected by charity is received by the habit of faith, as well as by its act; and in like manner, the same may be said of all the virtues. To strengthen their interpretation, the Salmanticenses appeal to the long passage found in the earliest work of the Angelic Doctor. Perhaps its exceptional brilliance will be our sufficient reason for quoting so long a text.

Charity is related to all the other virtues as mover, end, and form.

That it is the mover of all the other virtues is evident from this that the very good which is the object of charity under the *ratio* of end, is the end of the virtues.

Now it so happens that in all the ordained potencies and arts, the art or potency which is concerned with the end, ordinates the acts of the others to [its] proper end . . .

And therefore charity is called the mother of the other virtues in so far as it produces the acts of the other virtues from the conception of the end, in so far as it has *per se* the mode of seed, since it is the principal among operables, as the Philosopher says. And in

⁸⁰ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 9: *Quando superior vis perfecta est, ex ejus perfectione relinquitur aliqua perfectio in inferiori; et sic, cum caritas est in voluntate, ejus perfectio aliquo modo redundat in intellectum: et sic caritas non solum actum fidei, sed ipsam fidem informat.* Cf. Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, n. 48, p. 313.

this manner it is said to command the acts of the inferior virtues, according as it makes them operate on account of its [charity's] proper end; and in this way it moves the other inferior virtues to its own end. Hence charity moves all the other virtues to its own end, and in this way it is said to command their acts.

There is this difference between commanding and eliciting an act, [namely], that the habit or the potency elicits that act which it produces with respect to the object independently of any medium; but it commands the act which it produces through the medium of an inferior potency or habit with respect to the object of that potency. So therefore charity is the mover of the other virtues.

It is likewise the end; for this is common among all virtues, that their acts are their proximate ends, since the act is the second perfection, the habit the first perfection; and the less complete is ordained to the more complete as to an end. Now the end of the inferior potency or habit is ordained to the end of the superior, just as the military end [is ordained] to the civil end. Hence, the acts of all the other virtues are ordained to the act of charity as to the end, and because of this charity is said to be the end of the precept.

It is likewise evident that there is a form perfecting each virtue in "*ratione virtutis*". The inferior potency does not have the perfection of virtue unless it participates in the perfection of the superior potency: just as a habit which is in the irascible [appetite] does not have the *ratio* of virtue, as is said in 4 Ethic., save in so far as it receives understanding and discretion from reason which prudence perfects: and in this way prudence places a mode and a form in all the other moral virtues.

All the other virtues which are meritorious of eternal life, in which sense we are now speaking of virtues, are in potencies subject to the will, for no act of any potency can be meritorious, unless it have something of the *voluntarium*: which is effected by this, that the

will commands and moves the acts of the other potencies. Hence, it cannot happen that any habit existing in some potency of the soul should have the *ratio* of virtue, in the sense of meritorious virtues with which we are now concerned, unless in this way, that in that potency there is some participation in the perfection of the will which charity perfects.

And therefore charity is the form of all the other virtues, just as prudence is [the form of] the moral virtues. And this is one way in which charity is the form of the virtues. Two other ways can be taken from this, that it is the mover and the end, in so far as the one moving places its motion in the instrument (*movens ponit motum suum in instrumentum*), and those things which are *ad finem* are directed by reason of the end. And so the mode of charity is participated in by the other virtues in so far as they are moved by charity, and in so far as they are ordinated to itself, as to an end.⁸¹

⁸¹ *In III Sent.* dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3: *Caritas ad omnes alias virtutes comparatur et ut motor et ut finis et ut forma.*

Quod autem motor sit omnium aliarum virtutum ex hoc patet quia ipsum bonum quod est objectum caritatis sub ratione finis, est finis virtutum.

In omnibus autem potentiis vel artibus ordinatis ita accidit quod ars vel potentia quae est circa finem, ordinat aliarum actus ad finem proprium; . . .

Et ideo dicitur caritas mater aliarum virtutum, inquantum earum actus producit ex conceptione finis qui habet se per modum seminis, cum sit "principium in operabilibus," ut dicit Philosophus; et secundum hoc dicitur imperare actus inferiorum virtutum, secundum quod facit eas operari propter finem suum; et secundum hoc movet alias artes inferiores ad finem suum. Unde caritas etiam omnes alias virtutes ad suum finem movet, et secundum hoc dicitur earum actus imperare.

Hoc enim interest inter elicere actum et imperare, quod habitus vel potentia elicit illum actum quem producit circa suum objectum nullo mediante; sed imperat actum qui producitur mediante potentia vel habitu inferiori circa objectum illius potentiae. Sic ergo caritas est motor aliarum virtutum.

Similiter etiam est finis; quia hoc commune est in omnibus virtutibus quod actus ipsarum sunt proximi fines earum, cum actus sit perfectio secunda et habitus perfectio prima; et minus completum ordinatur ad magis completum sicut ad finem. Finis autem inferioris potentiae vel habitus

With these texts of the Angelic Doctor as their support, the Salmanticenses formulate their general argument as follows:

The formation of the act of the inferior virtue through charity demands something real and intrinsic derived from charity. Therefore the formation of the habit of the inferior virtue by charity proportionately demands the same thing. The antecedent is proved because the formation of the act of virtue through charity consists in this, that it is ordinated, or referred, not only to the proximate, proper end of the virtue by which it is elicited; but also to the ultimate, proper end of charity by which it is commanded. But this order or habitude of the act of the inferior virtue to the ultimate end is something intrinsic, derived from charity. Therefore, the formation of the act of the inferior virtue through charity demands something intrinsic derived from charity.⁸²

ordinatur ad finem superioris, sicut finis militaris ad finem civilis. Unde actus omnium aliarum virtutum ordinantur ad actum caritatis sicut ad finem; et propter hoc dicitur caritas finis praecepti.

Similiter etiam patet quod est forma perficiens unamquamque virtutem in *ratione virtutis*. Inferior enim potentia non habet perfectionem virtutis nisi secundum quod participat perfectionem potentiae superioris; sicut habitus qui est in irascibili non habet rationem virtutis, . . . nisi inquantum intellectum recipit et discretionem a ratione quam perficit prudentia; et secundum hoc prudentia ponit formam et modum in omnibus aliis moralibus.

Omnes autem virtutes quae sunt meritoriae vitae aeternae, secundum quod nunc loquimur de virtutibus, sunt in potentiis voluntati subjectis; quia nullus actus alicujus potentiae potest esse meritorius nisi inquantum habet aliquid de voluntario: quod contingit ex hoc quod voluntas movet et imperat actus aliarum potentiarum. Unde non potest esse quod aliquis habitus existens in aliqua potentia animae habeat rationem virtutis, loquendo de virtutibus meritoriis, de quibus hic loquimur, nisi secundum hoc quod in illa potentia participatur aliquid de perfectione voluntatis quam caritas perficit.

Et ideo caritas est forma aliarum virtutum omnium, sicut prudentia moralium. Et hic est unus modus quo caritas est forma aliarum virtutum. Alii autem duo modi possunt accipi ex hoc quod ipsa est motor et finis, inquantum movens ponit modum suum in instrumento, et ea quae sunt ad finem diriguntur ex ratione finis. Et ita modus caritatis participatur in aliis virtutibus, inquantum moventur a caritate, et inquantum ordinantur in ipsum sicut in finem.

⁸² Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, XII, tr. 19 (De Charitate Theologica)

There are obviously two points involved in this general argument. Firstly, the act of the inferior virtue is informed through a real, intrinsic mutation. Secondly, because the act needs such an intrinsic, real mutation in order that it be directed to the end of charity, the very habit of the inferior virtues must also receive something from the habit of charity whereby it is intrinsically changed. In support of their opinion that the act of the inferior virtues need some real, intrinsic quiddity derived from charity that it be ordained to the ultimate end of charity, the Salmanticenses offer three reasons. It is to be noted that they do not say these reasons prove their point, but that it is a case of *minor suadetur*.⁸⁸

Firstly, any act which attains an end, necessarily bespeaks a real order or ordination to that end, so that when the act of an inferior virtue attains the end proper to charity, it necessarily bespeaks a real habitude to the end of charity. Now this habitude is not proportionate to the virtue itself, nor to the proximate virtue by which it is elicited; hence, it must be that this habitude to the end of charity comes by participation from the influx of charity to which such a habitude to the final end is proper. *Secondly*, acts and effects derive diverse modifications according to the end to which they are ordained by the motion of the agent intending the end. Therefore, since the act of the inferior virtue is ordained to the end of charity in that it is intended by reason of the proper end of charity, it follows that there must be some intrinsic modification derived from charity. *Thirdly*, the acts of the inferior virtues, because they are ordained to the ultimate end from the intention of charity, become acts worthy

disp. 7, dub. 3, n. 49, p. 313: formatio actus virtutis inferioris per charitatem importat aliquid reale intrinsecum derivatum ex charitate: ergo idem proportionabiliter importat formatio habitus virtutis inferioris per charitatem. Probatur antecedens, quia formatio actus virtutis per charitatem consistit in eo, quod ordinetur, sive referatur non solum ad finem proximum proprium virtutis, a qua elicetur; sed etiam ad finem ultimum proprium charitatis, a qua imperatur: sed hic ordo, sive habitudo actus virtutis inferioris ad finem ultimum est aliquid intrinsecum derivatum a charitate: ergo formatio actus virtutis inferioris per charitatem importat aliquid intrinsecum derivatum a charitate.

⁸⁸ *Op cit.*, loc. cit.

of merit *de condigno*. But the dignity or worth of such acts is not an *ens rationis*, nor a mere extrinsic denomination, but something real.⁸⁴ Therefore, the ordination or habitude which the act of the inferior virtue has from the motion of charity to the end proper to charity is something real. And since such an habitude does not pertain to the species of the act of the inferior virtue, it follows that it must be something intrinsic superadded to it.⁸⁵ And this intrinsic quiddity is, as it were, a form constituting the acts of the inferior virtues in *esse virtuoso simpliciter*.⁸⁶

For the Salmanticense therefore, charity may be called the intrinsic, substantial, effective form of the acts of the inferior virtues in that from its own act commanding the acts of the inferior virtues there flows a real and intrinsic quiddity which constitutes the acts of the inferior virtues in *esse virtuoso simpliciter*.

These authors now take up the second part of their claim, namely, that charity is the real and intrinsic form of the habits of virtue. Their general argument follows.

. . . that intrinsic quiddity by which we said the act of an inferior virtue was informed, ought to be pre-contained in the proximate elicitive principal of such an act; but charity is not a principle of this sort, but rather the inferior virtue, to which the act corresponds *secundum speciem*: therefore the aforementioned virtue [the inferior virtue] ought to be informed in itself through some intrinsic quiddity by reason of which it would precontain the ordination to the end of charity which is found in its acts: since such a power [the ordination to the end of charity] is not due to the inferior virtue of itself, but [rather] to the influx of charity to which it belongs *per se* to look to the ultimate end, it follows that the inferior

⁸⁴ *Op. cit.*, X, tr. 16, (*De Merito*) disp. 4, dub. 5.

⁸⁵ *Op. cit.*, XII, tr. 19 (*De Charitate Theologica*) disp. 7, dub. 3, n. 50, p. 314.

⁸⁶ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit., n. 48, p. 313.

virtues are intrinsically formed through something real which is derived from charity.⁸⁷

It is evident that the Salmanticenses teach the information of the very habits of inferior virtues through the agency of some intrinsic quiddity derived from charity. Their basic argument for stating this opinion is that the habits of virtue ought to pre-contain the ordination to the ultimate end found in their acts ordinated to the end of charity from the intention of charity. In support of this reasoning they offer the following considerations.

First of all, charity itself does not *elicit* the acts superior to the natural powers of the inferior virtues, otherwise there would be only one power for all actions. These acts are elicited by the specific virtues whose determination depends on their respective proper objects and ends. Secondly, the ordination to the ultimate end found in the acts of the inferior virtues commanded by charity is not effected as an end in itself, but with a view to producing other acts which it will in turn ordain to the ultimate end. Therefore such acts ordinated to the ultimate end ought to be elicited and should proceed from the same principle. Finally, not infrequently does it happen that an inferior virtue elicits informed acts without their being any formal influx of charity, as takes place when a person justified through attrition and the reception of the sacraments, elicits works of the other virtues before he elicits a formal act of charity. Such works are commonly admitted to be meritorious. But in this case the ordination to the ultimate end cannot be attributed to the act of charity, but must be attributed to the virtues then operating. Hence, even prior to the action of the act of charity commanding the acts of the inferior virtues some real, intrinsic quiddity flows

⁸⁷ *Op. cit., loc. cit.,* n. 50, p. 314: . . . illud intrinsecum, quo actum virtutis inferioris formari diximus, debet praehaberi in principio proximo elicitivo talis actus: sed huiusmodi principium non est charitas, sed virtus inferior, cui actus secundum speciem correspondet: ergo praedicta virtus debet formari in seipsa per aliquid intrinsecum, ratione cuius praecontineat ordinem ad charitatis finem, qui in suis actibus reperitur: cumque hujusmodi vis non conveniat virtuti inferiori ex se, sed ex influxu charitatis, cui per se convenit respicere illum finem, sequitur virtutes inferiores formari intrinsece per aliquid reale, quod derivetur ex charitate.

from the habit of charity into the habits of the inferior virtues in much the same manner as the virtues flow from grace and properties from nature.⁸⁸

While it may be conceded that the act of charity commanding the acts of the inferior virtues could elevate the habits of virtue *per modum transeuntis*, it is more fitting that the virtues should possess habitually, from the moment charity is infused, the information which it can give. Several considerations indicate the reasonableness of such a view. Are not the virtues said to be habitually *vivae et formatae*, as well because the very inclination of charity towards the ultimate end subordinates them to the ultimate end, as because even before the formal act of charity, these virtues elicit meritorious acts?⁸⁹ Nonetheless, it may be admitted that the causality exercised by the habit of charity upon the habits of inferior virtues antecedently to the formal act of charity is not strictly but reductively effective.⁹⁰

According to these authors then, charity may be termed the intrinsic and reductively effective form of the virtues in that some real intrinsic quiddity flows from the habit of charity into the habits of the inferior virtues making them capable of eliciting informed acts ordinated to the ultimate end. This quiddity remains habitually in the inferior virtues and is placed there antecedently to a formal act of charity commanding the acts of the inferior virtues.

In confirmation of their view the Salmanticenses appeal to what they consider a parallel case as presented by St. Thomas.

It is not fitting that God should provide less for those whom He loves that they might have a supernatural good, than for creatures whom He loves that they might have a natural good. Now He so provides for natural creatures that not only does He move them to

⁸⁸ *Op. cit., loc. cit.*

⁸⁹ *Op. cit., loc. cit., n. 52, p. 315.*

⁹⁰ *Op. cit., loc. cit., n. 53, p. 316:* . . . licet ante exercitium actuale charitatis nihil possit ab ea derivari per efficientiam rigorosam, potest tamen per simplicem dimanationem, eo proportionali modo, quo virtutes fluunt a gratia, et proprietates a natura: qui influendi modus reducitur ad genus causae efficientis . . .

natural acts, but He even bestows certain forms and virtues upon them which are principles of acts, so that of themselves they are inclined to motion of this kind [that is, in accord with the form bestowed]. And so the motions to which they are moved by God become connatural and easy to creatures, according to Wisdom 8, 1: *And He disposes all things sweetly.* Much more so therefore, into those whom He moves to attain a supernatural, eternal good, does He infuse certain forms or supernatural qualities, according to which they are moved sweetly, and promptly by Him in order to attain an eternal good.⁹¹

Put summarily, the following appears to be the teaching of the Salmanticenses concerning charity as the effective form of the virtues. The habit of charity antecedently to an act of charity habitually informs the habits of the inferior virtues by *diminatio*, in that from the habit of charity there flows some intrinsic and real perfection which perfects the other habits so

⁹¹ *I-II*, q. 110, a. 2, corp: . . . non est conveniens quod Deus minus provideat his quos diligit ad supernaturale bonum habendum, quam creaturis quas diligit ad bonum naturale habendum. Creaturis autem naturalibus sic providet, ut non solum moveat eas ad actus naturales, sed etiam largiatur eis formas et virtutes, quasdam, quae sunt principia actuum, ut secundum seipsas inclinentur ad hujusmodi motus; et sic motus quibus a Deo moventur, fiunt creaturis connaturales et faciles, secundum illud Sap. 8, 1: *Et disponit omnia suaviter.* Multi igitur magis illis quos movet ad consequendum bonum supernaturale aeternum, infundit aliquas formas, seu qualitates supernaturales, secundum quas suaviter et prompte ab ipso moveantur ad bonum aeternum consequendum; . . . Cf. Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, n. 54, p. 316. Vincent Ferre to whom the Salmanticenses appealed in support of their view is indeed in substantial agreement with them. Cf. *De Virtutibus Theologicis*, II, q. 11, III, n. 14, p. 332sq. However, John of St. Thomas, whose authority these authors also claim, while admitting that some real, intrinsic quiddity is derived from charity, and that it does perfect the habits of the inferior virtues, insists that this is not due to *diminatio*, but from an *act of the will commanding*. Cf. *Cursus Philosophicus*, III (De Anima) q. 12, a. 6. Lercher also states that the very habit of charity informs the habits of the inferior virtues antecedently to any act of charity commanding; but he does not say whether any real intrinsic quiddity flows from the habit into the habit of the inferior virtues. Cf. *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae*, IV/1, n. 168c, p. 170.

that they remain habitually subject to the will perfected by charity, and so that the acts elicited by the habit thus informed become connatural to it. And secondly, the act of charity informs the acts of the inferior virtues by imprinting upon them a real, intrinsic form through which they are ordained to the proper end of charity, being thereby constituted in *esse virtuoso simpliciter*.

c. The Teaching of St. Thomas

We have seen the two principal opinions which purport to convey the teaching of the Angelic Doctor concerning the nature of charity as the effective form. It now remains to examine the writings of Thomas himself, and in view of them to give our interpretation of his doctrine.

Let us recall for a moment the passage wherein charity was termed the effective form of the virtues.

Charity is said to be the form of the other virtues . . . effectively, in so far namely, as it imposes a form on all the virtues in the manner described in the body of the article.⁹²

Here we are told that charity is the effective form of the virtues because it imposes a form on them in a particular manner. If, however, we wish to know *how* this is done, we must refer to the *corpus articuli*, where the Angelic Doctor says that

. . . what gives the act reference to the end, also gives it [its] form.

However, it is evident according to what was said in the preceding article, that through charity the acts of all the other virtues are referred to the ultimate end; and in this way does it give the form to the acts of all the other virtues; and to this extent (*pro tanto*) is it

⁹² II-II, q. 23, a. 8, ad 1. *Quotation ut supra.*

said to be the form of the virtues; for the virtues themselves are said to be in order to informed acts.⁹³

Charity therefore must be termed the effective form of the virtues *to the extent that it refers their acts to the ultimate end.*

Just how this is effected appears from the concept of charity as the mother of the virtues. St. Thomas says that

. . . charity is called the mother of all the virtues, in so far as from the conception of its end there is produced the acts of all the virtues.⁹⁴

Again, in an earlier work, the Angelic Doctor says:

. . . charity is the mother of the other virtues in so far as it produces their acts from the conception of the end, . . . and in this way is charity said to command the acts of the inferior virtues according as it makes them operate because of its own end.⁹⁵

Finally, in his Summa we find the same teaching:

. . . And that is called mother which conceives within itself from another, and for this reason it [charity] is said to be the mother of the other virtues because from its desire of the ultimate end it conceives the acts of the other virtues by commanding them.⁹⁶

⁹³ *Op. cit., loc. cit., corp:* . . . id quod dat actui ordinem ad finem, det ei et formam. Manifestum est autem secundum praedicta, art. praec., quod per charitatem ordinantur actus omnium aliarum virtutum ad ultimum finem; et secundum hoc ipsa dat formam actibus omnium aliarum virtutum; et pro tanto dicitur esse forma virtutum; nam et ipsae virtutes dicuntur in ordine ad actus formatos.

⁹⁴ *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, corp. in fine: . . . dicitur caritas mater omnium virtutum, inquantum ex conceptione sui finis producitur actus omnium virtutum; et eadem etiam ratione dicitur radix virtutum.

⁹⁵ *In III Sent. dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3 in princ.* Quotation *ut supra*, note 81.

⁹⁶ *II-II, q. 23, a. 8, ad 3:* . . . Et quia mater est quae in se concepit ex alio, ex hac ratione dicitur mater aliarum virtutum, quia ex appetitu finis ultimi concipit actus aliarum virtutum, imperando ipsos.

Hence charity is said to produce the acts of the inferior virtues in this way. First, it conceives its own end, and then makes the inferior virtues act because of that end. In short, the acts of the inferior virtue are produced in order to attain the end of charity.

Charity, however, does not elicit the acts of the inferior virtues from the intention of its own end, but commands them.

Charity does not produce the acts of the other virtues *elicitive*, but *imperative* only; for a virtue elicits only those acts which are according to the *ratio* of the proper form, just as justice does rightly, and temperance temperately; but it [charity] is said to command all those acts which it draws to its own end.⁹⁷

The difference between an elicited and a commanded act is nicely delineated by St. Thomas.

There is this difference between eliciting and commanding an act, that the habit or potency elicits that act which it produces with respect to the object through no medium: but it commands the act which it produces through the medium of the inferior potency or habit with respect to the object of that potency.⁹⁸

Now because charity produces the acts of the inferior virtues in that it commands the inferior virtues which elicit acts which it somehow refers to its own proper end, charity is called the motor of the virtues.

⁹⁷ *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 5, ad 3: *Caritas non producit actus aliarum virtutum elicitive, sed imperative tantum: elicit enim virtus illos actus tantum qui sunt secundum rationem propriae formae, sicut justitia recte facere, et temperantia temperanter; sed imperare dicitur omnes actus quos ad finem suum advocat.*

⁹⁸ *In III Sent. dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3 in med:* *Hoc enim interest inter elicere actum et imperare, quod habitus vel potentia elicit illum actum quem producit circa suum objectum nullo mediante; sed imperat actum qui producitur mediante potentia vel habitu inferiori circa objectum illius potentiae.*

And here it is also apparent in what manner charity is the motor of all the virtues; namely, in so far as it commands the acts of all the other virtues.⁹⁹

It follows therefore that when we speak of charity as the effective form of the virtues in that it refers the acts of the inferior virtues to the ultimate end, and when we speak of charity as the motor of the virtues we are speaking of two things which are only nominally distinct.

Now if we would learn more concerning the nature of this *imperium caritatis* we must necessarily investigate the nature of charity as the *motor virtutum*. On this point St. Thomas has a very interesting statement.

... charity is the motor and the end, in so far as the one moving places its motion in the instrument, and those things which are *ad finem* are directed by reason of the end; and so the mode of charity is participated in by the other virtues in so far as they are moved by charity, and in so far as they are ordinated to itself as to the end.¹⁰⁰

The following conclusions concerning the *imperium caritatis* are now in order. First charity conceives its own end. In order to secure that end, it commands the virtues to act because of that end. In commanding the virtues charity places its own motion or ordination to the end in the virtues so that they are directed to the end of charity by reason of the end. As a result, the inferior virtues participate in the mode proper to charity.

Now St. Thomas points out that this motion or ordination

⁹⁹ *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, corp. in med: Et hinc etiam apparet, quomodo caritas sit motor omnium virtutum; inquantum scilicet importat actus omnium aliarum virtutum. Cf. *In III Sent.* dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3, *II-II*, q. 23, a. 8, corp.

¹⁰⁰ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit. in fine: . . . ipsa est motor et finis, inquantum movens ponit modum (Ed. motum) suum in instrumento, et ea quae sunt ad finem diriguntur ex ratione finis. Et ita modus caritatis participatur in aliis virtutibus, inquantum moventur a caritate, et inquantum ordinantur in ipsam sicut in finem.

proper to charity, placed in the inferior virtues commanded by charity, constitutes the form of the virtues.

. . . and in this manner is prudence the form of the other moral virtues, in so far as some signed ordination of prudence gives to the habits in the inferior powers the *ratio* of virtue. And similarly, charity with respect to all the other virtues.¹⁰¹

Charity therefore is the effective form of the virtues in that having conceived its own end, it refers the acts of the inferior virtues to its end through the medium of a form which it leaves in the virtues. This form is itself a participation in the ordination to the end proper to the act of charity, and because of its presence in the virtues, they are said to share in the mode proper to charity.

This form left in the inferior virtues from the command of charity is the subject matter of an interesting and enlightening passage in St. Thomas.

. . . But that which is *ex caritate* is left in faith, and it is intrinsic to faith, and in what manner this is accidental or substantial will be seen later.¹⁰²

Is this quiddity *ex caritate* identically the same thing as the motion of charity placed in the virtues through the *actus imperatus caritatis*, referring the acts of the inferior virtues to its own end because of that end? It would seem so. For in explaining how charity informs faith St. Thomas says:

. . . When therefore there are two moving principles or agents ordered one to the other, what is effectively

¹⁰¹ *Op. cit., loc. cit. ad 1: . . . Et hoc modo prudentia est forma aliarum virtutum moralium, inquantum sigillatus ordo quidam prudentiae in inferioribus viribus dat habitibus qui ibi sunt, rationem virtutis.*

Et similiter est de caritate respectu omnium aliarum virtutum.

¹⁰² *De Veritate, q. 14, a. 5, ad 4: . . . Sed id quod ex caritate in fide relinquitur, est fidei intrinsecum; et hoc quomodo sit fidei accidentale, vel substantiale, infra dicetur.*

from the superior agent is as it were formal; what is from the inferior agent, is, as it were, material . . .

Since therefore faith is in the intellect according as it is moved and commanded by the will, what is *ex parte cognitionis* is, as it were, material in it; but what is *ex parte voluntatis* must be taken as its information. And therefore, since charity is the perfection of the will, faith is informed by charity, and for the same reason [are] all the other virtues as they are considered by the theologian, namely, in so far as they are principles of a meritorious act, [informed]. For there cannot be any meritorious act unless it be voluntary . . . And so it is evident that all the virtues which theologians consider are in the powers of the soul as moved by the will.¹⁰³

In the quotation wherein St. Thomas said the quiddity *ex caritate* is intrinsic to faith, and in one way accidental to it, and in another substantial, he did not tell us what this quiddity is, nor how it is placed in the virtue of faith. But from the passage just cited, it is apparent that this quiddity is placed in the virtue of faith through the command of charity. Hence the quiddity *ex caritate* spoken of here, and the form impressed upon the virtues through the *imperium caritatis* must be one and the same thing. Therefore, by investigating the relation existing between this quiddity *ex caritate* and the virtue of faith, we will be learning more about the *imperium caritatis*, and hence about the nature of charity as the effective form. Further, although this

¹⁰³ *Op. cit., loc. cit., corp. in med: . . . Quandocumque enim dua sunt principia moventia vel agentia ad invicem ordinata, id quod in effectu est ab agente superiori, est sicut formale; quod vero est ab inferiori agente, est sicut materiale . . .*

Cum igitur fides sit in intellectu secundum quod est motus et imperatus a voluntate; id quod est *ex parte cognitionis*, est quasi materiale in ipsa; sed *ex parte voluntatis* accipienda est ipsius formatio. Et ideo, cum caritas sit perfectio voluntatis; a caritate fides informatur, et eadem ratione omnes aliae virtutes prout a theologo considerantur; prout scilicet sunt principia actus meritorii. Non autem potest aliquis actus esse meritorius nisi sit voluntarius, . . . Et sic patet quod omnes virtutes quas theologus considerat, sunt in viribus animae, prout sunt a voluntate motae.

development takes place within the limited framework of the virtue of faith, we may apply whatever conclusions are reached in a general manner, for St. Thomas has expressly said that what is true of the information of faith by charity, is likewise true of all the other virtues.

We shall first quote in its entirety a very pertinent passage and then discuss its various parts.

The very habit of charity, since it is not intrinsic to faith, cannot be called either its substantial or its accidental form; it can, however, in some manner be called the exemplary form . . . But that which is *ex caritate*, is left in faith, and in what manner this is accidental or substantial will be seen later.¹⁰⁴

It is immediately obvious that, in discussing charity as the form of the virtues, St. Thomas eliminates the possibility of charity's being the substantial or accidental form of the virtues, precisely as a habit. And the reason he gives is noteworthy: "since it is not *intrinsic* to faith". He allows only that in some way the habit of charity may be called the exemplary form of the virtues.¹⁰⁵

In the course of his many writings St. Thomas has made abundantly clear why the very habit of charity cannot be called the substantial form. The primary reason is that every virtue, even charity itself, is specified by its own proper object and has its proper act which attains its proper end. Let us allow St. Thomas to speak for himself.

From its proper end and proper object each virtue has a special form through which it is this virtue.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ *Op. cit., loc. cit.*, ad 4: *Ipse habitus caritatis cum non sit intrinsecus fidei, non potest dici forma substantialis neque accidentalis ejus; potest autem aliquo modo dici exemplaris forma . . . Sed id quod ex caritate in fide est fidei intrinsecum; et hoc quomodo sit fidei accidentale, vel substantiale, infra dicetur.*

¹⁰⁵ *Op. cit., loc. cit.* Cf. *In III Sent.* Dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3, ad 1. *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, ad 6. Confer our text, pages 17-20.

¹⁰⁶ *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, ad 9: *A proprio fine at a proprio objecto quaelibet virtus habet formam specialem, per quam est haec virtus.* Cf. *Ibid*, ad 10. *In III Sent.* dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3, ad 5.

Now that virtue which has its special form from its proper object and end cannot possibly be the special form of another virtue. Hence the habit of charity, which like the other virtues has its proper object and end, cannot be the constitutive form of some particular virtue specified by its proper object and end. As St. Thomas says in replying to an objection,

That reasoning proceeds from the form that enters into the constitution of a thing. Charity is not called the form of the virtues in such a manner, but in another way.¹⁰⁷

Further, the habit of charity, since it is the end of the inferior virtues, cannot be intrinsic to the virtues; and therefore cannot be either their accidental or substantial form. That the end of a thing cannot be the intrinsic form is certainly Thomistic teaching.

The intrinsic form cannot be the end of a thing, although it may be the end of the generation of a thing.¹⁰⁸

With equal definitiveness the Angelic Doctor asserts that charity is the end of the virtues.

And so the mode of charity is participated in by the other virtues in so far as they are moved by charity, and in so far as they are ordained to itself, as to an end.¹⁰⁹

From what we have learned so far, we cannot say that St. Thomas denies that charity is in *any* way intrinsic to the virtues

¹⁰⁷ *Op. cit., loc. cit., ad 4:* Ratio illa procedit de forma quae intrat constitutionem rei. Sic autem caritas non dicitur forma virtutum, sed alio modo. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 1.

¹⁰⁸ *Op. cit., loc. cit., ad 18:* Forma intrinseca non potest esse finis rei, licet sit finis generationis rei.

¹⁰⁹ *In III Sent. dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3, in fine:* . . . et ita modus caritatis participatur in aliis virtutibus, in quantum moventur a caritate, et in quantum ordinantur in ipsam sicut in finem. Cf. *Ibid*, ad 2, 3, 5. *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, corp. *In II Sent. dist. 38, q. 1, a. 1, Sol.*

or that it is in *no* way constitutive of the virtues, but only that the *habit* of charity is not intrinsic to the virtues, and hence that the habit of charity is not their constitutive or accidental form. In fact, he explicitly states that the quiddity *ex caritate* is intrinsic to faith, and is in some manner accidental to it, and in another manner substantial.

But that which is *ex caritate*, is left in faith, and in what manner this is accidental or substantial will be seen later.¹¹⁰

It is now time to discuss this question. Nor do we have to go far to find the explanation of the Angelic Doctor, for he treats of the matter in the very next article of the *De Veritate*. Let us repeat here, however, that he is speaking now of the effect that the quiddity which flows from charity (the participation in the formal motion of charity to the end *sub ratione finis*) has upon the other virtues constituted and specified by their proper objects. What does St. Thomas say?

Something can be accidental to another thing in *genere naturae* which is essential to it as it refers to the *genus moris*, namely, to vice or virtue . . . and similarly that which faith receives *ex caritate*, is accidental to it according to the *genus naturae*, but is essential to it according to the *genus moris*, and therefore through this [the quiddity *ex caritate*] it is placed in the genus of virtue.¹¹¹

What does St. Thomas mean by the phrase *genus naturae* and *genus moris*? An examination of the context in which these phrases occur will give us the answer, since these two phrases are used in the reply given to the following objection.

¹¹⁰ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 4. *Quotation ut supra*.

¹¹¹ *Op. cit.*, a. 6, ad 1: *Aliiquid potest esse accidentale alicui prout est in genere naturae, quod est sibi essentiale prout refertur ad genus moris, scilicet ad vitium vel virtutem; . . . Et similiter id quod fides ex caritate recipit, est sibi accidentale secundum genus naturae, sed essentiale prout refertur ad genus moris; et ideo per hoc ponitur in genere virtutis.*

Sixthly, it is asked whether uninformed faith is a virtue, and it seems that it is. For that which faith receives from charity cannot be essential to faith itself, since faith can exist without it. But something is not placed in a genus through something accidental to it. Therefore faith is not placed in the genus of virtue through that [quiddity] by which it is informed by charity; therefore it [faith] is a virtue without the form of charity.¹¹²

The objector points out that faith can exist without charity, and hence the form bestowed upon it by charity is only accidental to it. But an accidental perfection does not place a thing in some genus. Therefore faith, even though not informed by charity, is a virtue.

In the *corpus* of the same article St. Thomas answers that here he is speaking of virtues in the proper sense.¹¹³ And in the proper sense a virtue is defined as *habitus potens elicere actum perfectum*.¹¹⁴ Again, he points out that by philosophers, who do not consider virtues as principles of meritorious acts, uninformed habits are called virtues, but not by the theologians.¹¹⁵ Hence, when the Angelic Doctor says that the habit of faith not informed by charity is not a virtue, he means that the habit of faith is not a perfect or meritorious habit of virtue. Nor does this teaching deny that the uninformed habit of faith is a true virtue in so far as it is ordained to a real, particular good; it specifies the uninformed habit as an imperfect true virtue because it is not ordained to the ultimate good in a meritorious manner,

¹¹² *Op. cit., loc. cit., obj. 1:* Sexto quaeritur, utrum fides informis sit virtus; et videtur quod sic. Illud enim quod fides a caritate consequitur non potest esse ipsi fidei essentiale, cum sine eo fides esse possit. Sed per id quod est alicui accidentale, non collocatur aliquid in genere. Ergo fides per id quod est formata a caritate, non collocatur in genere virtutis; ergo sine forma caritatis est virtus.

¹¹³ *Op. cit., a. 6, corp: . . . proprie de virtute, fides informis non est virtus.*

¹¹⁴ *Op. cit., loc. cits . . . virtus, proprie loquendo, est habitus potens elicere actum perfectum.*

¹¹⁵ *Op. cit., loc. cit., ad 5: . . . philosophi non considerant virtutes secundum quod sunt principia actus meritorii; et ideo secundum eos habitus non formati caritate possunt dici virtutes; non autem secundum theologum.*

and hence not a perfect habit capable of meritorious acts.¹¹⁶ Information by charity is responsible for the difference in perfection between the two habits.¹¹⁷

Therefore, when St. Thomas uses these phrases—*genus naturae* and *genus moris*—he appears to be using different terminology to express a familiar concept. *Fides in genere naturae* seems to be a synonym for *fides vera imperfecta*; *fides in genere virtutis*, a synonym for *fides simpliciter vera*. So that when he says the quiddity *ex caritate* (the participation in the formal motion of charity to the end *sub ratione finis*) is accidental to faith in *genere naturae*, he means it is accidental to faith considered as a true but imperfect supernatural virtue. When he says it is essential to faith in *genere moris*, he means it is essential to faith considered as a *virtus simpliciter vera*. It is, however, intrinsic to both types of virtue.

The relationship existing between the *virtus vera imperfecta* and the *virtus simpliciter vera* is one of degree of perfection, and therefore only an accidental relationship; for the informed habit is substantially the same as the uninformed habit.¹¹⁸ They are diversified only as perfect and imperfect habits. The quiddity *ex caritate* (the participation in the formal motion of charity to the end *sub ratione finis*) which makes a true but imperfect virtue to be a true and perfect virtue is intrinsic but only accidental to the *virtus vera imperfecta*. However, the quiddity *ex caritate* plus the substantial *esse* of the *virtus vera imperfecta*, make up the essence of the *virtus simpliciter vera*. The Angelic Doctor

¹¹⁶ *II-II*, q. 23, a. 7, corp. Cf. *I-II*, q. 65, a. 2, corp: a. 4, corp. Cf. our text, pages 1-5.

¹¹⁷ *Idem*. Cf. *In III Sent.* dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3: . . . Unde non potest esse quod aliquis habitus existens in aliqua potentia animae habeat rationem virtutis loquendo de virtutibus meritoriis, de quibus hic loquimur, nisi secundum hoc quod in illa potentia participatur aliquid de perfectione voluntatis quam caritas perficit.

¹¹⁸ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 7, corp. in fine: Fides autem formata et informis non differunt in objecto, sed solum in modo agendi. Fides enim formata perfecta voluntate assentit primae veritati; fides autem informis imperfecta voluntate. Unde fides formata et informis non distinguuntur sicut duo diversi habitus; sed sicut habitus perfectus et imperfectus. Unde, cum idem habitus qui prius fuit imperfectus, possit fieri perfectus; ipse habitus fidei informis fit formatus.

phrases it thus.

It is also evident that charity is the form perfecting each virtue in *ratione virtutis*. For the inferior potency does not have the perfection of virtue unless according as it participates in the perfection of the superior potency; just as a habit which is in the irascible [appetite] does not have the *ratio* of virtue . . . unless in so far as it receives understanding and discretion from reason which prudence perfects; and according to this prudence places its mode and form in all the other moral virtues. However, the other virtues which are meritorious of eternal life, according as we are now speaking of virtues, are in potencies subjected to the will; for no act of any potency can be meritorious except in so far as it has something from the *voluntarium*, which is effected by this that the will commands and moves the acts of the other potencies. Hence, it cannot be that some habit existing in some potency of the soul should have the *ratio* of virtue in the sense of meritorious virtue, about which we are here speaking, except according to this, that in that potency there is some participation of the perfection of the will which charity perfects; and therefore charity is the form of the other virtues just as prudence is the form of the moral virtues.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ In III Sent. dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3 in med: Similiter etiam patet quod est forma perficiens unamquamque virtutem in *ratione virtutis*. Inferior enim potentia non habet perfectionem virtutis nisi secundum quod participat perfectionem potentiae superioris; sicut habitus qui est in irascibili non habet rationem virtutis, . . . nisi inquantum intellectum recipit et discretionem a ratione quam perficit prudentia; et secundum hoc prudentia ponit formam et modum in omnibus aliis moralibus virtutibus.

Omnes autem virtutes quae sunt meritoriae vitae aeternae, secundum quod nunc loquimur de virtutibus, sunt in potentiis voluntati subjectis; quia nullus actus alicujus potentiae potest esse meritorius nisi inquantum habet aliquid de voluntario: quod contingit ex hoc quod voluntas movet et imperat actus aliarum potentiarum. Unde non potest esse quod aliquis habitus existens in aliqua potentia animae habeat rationem virtutis loquendo de virtutibus meritoriis, de quibus hic loquimur, nisi secundum hoc quod in illa potentia participatur aliquid de perfectione voluntatis quam caritas perficit.

Et ideo caritas est forma aliarum virtutum omnium, sicut prudentia moralium.

As a result of their participating in the proper motion of charity to the ultimate end and in its proper mode, the inferior virtues become perfect virtues and thereby capable of meritorious acts. The inferior virtues, prior to their receiving this perfection from charity were indeed ordered to the ultimate end but not *sub ratione finis*. Ordination to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis* is proper to charity alone. In other words, the ordination of the inferior virtues to the ultimate end prior to the command of charity is according to final causality. With the advent of the command from charity, the inferior virtues participate in the formal ordination to the ultimate end proper to charity alone, since it alone has the ultimate end *sub rationae finis* as proper object. Hence, the perfection bestowed upon the virtues by the command of charity is a participation in its proper formal ordination to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis*. For this reason, it appears, the inferior virtues are said to participate in the very mode of charity.¹²⁰ Now since charity commanded the virtues after having conceived its own end and with a view to attaining that end, it follows that the form impressed upon the virtues is a sharing in the *formal and explicit* ordination of charity to the ultimate end. The immediate result is that the virtues themselves become perfect virtues, and the acts they elicit are referred to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis*, and hence become meritorious acts.

*Charity therefore must be termed the effective form of the virtues in that through an impressed form (itself a participation in the formal explicit ordination of charity to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis*) which is intrinsic and constitutive of the virtutes simpliciter verae, it refers their elicited acts to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis*, thereby constituting them as meritorious acts.*

As we have seen, the form impressed upon the inferior virtues by the command of charity does not essentially change a virtue precisely in so far as it is a virtue, but only perfects that virtue. Thus the true virtue of temperance which participates in the

¹²⁰ *Op. cit., loc. cit. in fine: . . . Et ita modus caritatis participatur in aliis virtutibus, inquantum moventur a caritate, et inquantum ordinantur in ipsam sicut in finem.*

perfection of charity becomes the perfect virtue of temperance. However, its perfection as the perfect virtue of temperance, though essential to it as a *virtus perfecta*, is only accidental to it as the true virtue of temperance. The same distinction must be true of the acts elicited by the virtues perfected by charity. We recall that the acts of the virtues are commanded, not elicited by charity. The inferior virtues themselves elicit their own acts in accord with their proper objects and ends. So that the virtue of temperance, even though perfected by charity, elicits an act of temperance. The substance of the act of an inferior virtue therefore is not changed. However, this elicited act of temperance, in so far as it proceeds from the *virtus vera imperfecta*, is only materially referred to the ultimate end; but by reason of the form impressed upon the inferior virtue through the command of charity it is formally and explicitly referred to the ultimate end, and hence becomes a meritorious act. Hence, what is added to the substance of the act of temperance is formal and explicit ordination to the ultimate end—a new morality, for which the form impressed by charity is responsible. Therefore, the meritorious act of an inferior virtue commanded by charity is composed of the substance of the act of the inferior virtue plus its formal and explicit reference to the ultimate end given by the impressed form. Hence the form imposed by charity must be termed the substantial form of the meritorious acts of the virtues.

Charity therefore is the intrinsic and substantial effective form of the meritorious acts of virtue in that by referring the elicited acts of virtue to the ultimate end formally and explicitly, it constitutes them as meritorious acts.

* * * * *

It is well to recall here a certain statement made by St. Thomas in connection with charity as the effective form of the virtues. Earlier in this section of our work¹²¹ we quoted him as saying that charity is the effective form of the virtues to the extent that it referred the acts of the virtues to the ultimate end, for the *virtues themselves are said to be in order to informed acts*. The

¹²¹Cf. our text, page 6.

precise meaning of this statement will be discussed in our next chapter when we treat the relation existing between grace and charity as form.

d. Reply to Objections

The objections against the opinion which maintains that charity is the intrinsic and essential effective form of the virtues may be reduced to the following. Charity cannot be the intrinsic and essential form of the virtues because: 1) all the virtues would be of the same species; 2) because one and the same act, and one and the same virtue would be intrinsically and essentially constituted by many moral modes.

Reply to First Objection.—This objection may be answered by replying that it confuses the proper form of the virtues with the common or general form of the virtues. Now, charity as the intrinsic and essential effective form is not the proper form of the virtues, for this form is given by the proximate object and end of any virtue. As St. Thomas says:

. . . from the proper end and the proper object each virtue has a special form through which it is this virtue.¹²²

The form bestowed by charity, without disturbing the specific distinction of virtues drawn from the proper objects and ends, gives to each virtue a more general form which is common to them all, thereby drawing them under a more general species as meritorious virtues.

. . . although charity does not give to each virtue the proper species, nonetheless it does give to each virtue the common species of virtue according to which we speak of virtue as it is the principle of merit.¹²³

¹²² *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, ad 9: *A proprio fine et a proprio objecto quaelibet virtus habet formam specialem, per quam est haec virtus.*

¹²³ *Op. cit., loc. cit.*, ad 1: . . . licet caritas non det unicuique virtuti propriam speciem, dat tamen unicuique virtuti communem speciem virtutis, secundum quod loquimur de virtute prout est principium merendi.

Therefore the presence of charity as the intrinsic and essential form of the virtues does not reduce all the virtues to one proper species, but to one common species of virtue, that is, it makes them all meritorious virtues. This distinction is nicely worded by the Angelic Doctor.

Charity, since it is the common form of the virtues, draws the virtues into one common species; not, however, into one proper species, which is called the most special species.¹²⁴

It would appear that the basis for the objection is founded on the failure to distinguish between the *virtus vera imperfecta* and the *virtus simpliciter vera*. As we saw, although the quiddity *ex caritate* is intrinsic to the *virtus vera imperfecta*, it is not essential to it. This quiddity which is the effective form, is intrinsic but not essential to the particular virtue specified by its proper object and end; it is intrinsic and essential to the virtue in so far as it is perfect, that is, in so far as it is referred to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis*. And since the perfection of virtue is only accidental to virtue as such, that form which constitutes a virtue as a perfect virtue is only accidental to virtue as such; hence it cannot possibly be constitutive of it as a particular virtue. Consequently, charity as the intrinsic and essential form of the virtues does not destroy the proper form of any virtue, but rather adds to this particular and proper form a more general form which each virtue shares in common with all other perfect virtues. Since this common form shared by all the perfect virtues is only accidental to each particular virtue, and is itself a participation in the formal and explicit reference of charity to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis*, it cannot possibly reduce each particular virtue to one proper species, for the form of the particular virtue is essential to it as a virtue, and is drawn from its reference to a particular object and end.

Nor do the quotations from St. Thomas¹²⁵ wherein he says

¹²⁴ *Op. cit., loc. cit., ad 5:* Caritas, cum sit communis forma virtutum, trahit quidem virtutes in unam speciem communem; non autem in unam speciem propriam, quae dicitur species specialissima.

¹²⁵ Cf. *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, ad 16, 18. *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 1, 3, 4.

that charity is not the intrinsic or constitutive form of the virtues, disprove our contention. The same distinction, so much insisted on, will clarify his teaching. That charity is not the intrinsic and constitutive form of the *virtus vera imperfecta*, we concede to be the teaching of the Angelic Doctor. But it does not follow from this that St. Thomas denies that charity is the intrinsic and essential effective form of the *virtus simpliciter vera*, as we have seen.

Reply to Second Objection.—The objection proposed by Van Roey, that one and the same virtue cannot have diverse essential modalities,¹²⁶ labors under the same misunderstanding as did the difficulty to which we have just replied. We may answer in much the same manner.

Van Roey does not distinguish between the essence of virtue and its accidental perfection. We concede that one and the same virtue cannot be at one and the same time essentially the virtue of temperance and essentially the virtue of charity. This is not our contention. But what remains essentially the particular virtue of temperance can become *virtually* the virtue of charity, in that the virtue of temperance perfected by the form imposed by charity can act after the manner proper to charity, that is, meritoriously.¹²⁷ And since this modality whereby it is capable of acting like the habit of charity is constitutive of temperance not as a true virtue but as a perfect virtue, there is no reason why one and the same habit of virtue cannot have several essential modalities. The one essential modality (its perfection as true virtue) perfects it in *genere naturae*;¹²⁸ the other essential modality (its perfection as a perfect virtue) perfects it in *genere moris*.¹²⁹ In other words, the one essential modality perfects the virtue in its very substance; the other perfects the virtue in what is only an accidental modification of the virtue, its new

¹²⁶Cf. our text, page 23.

¹²⁷Cf. Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, XII, tr. 19 (De Charitate Theologica) disp. 7, dub. 3, n. 56, pp. 317-318.

¹²⁸Cf. our text, pages 45-47.

¹²⁹Cf. *Ibid.*

morality and ability to merit . . . its reference to the end *sub ratione finis*, and consequently its ability to merit.

The same principles are valid as regards the act of virtue. One and the same act can be perfected in what is of its substance and in what pertains to its accidental *esse*. An act proceeding from the perfect virtue of temperance has the essential modality of an act of temperance in so far as it proceeds from a true habit of virtue, but it likewise has the modality of what is only accidental to the true habit of temperance, but essential to the perfect habit of temperance . . . explicit, formal ordination to the end *sub ratione finis*. Hence, there is no repugnance in one and the same act having two essential modalities. For one modality is essential to the very substance of the act in so far as it is an act of virtue, the other modality is essential to an accidental modification of that act, namely that it is a perfect act of virtue. Such an act would be essentially an act of temperance, and virtually an act of charity.

Merklebach's¹³⁰ interpretation of St. Thomas, although necessarily brief, suffers thereby from ambiguity. However, it appears to be substantially accurate, save for his puzzling insistence that charity is the extrinsic effective form even while admitting that the form imposed by charity constitutes the virtues *in ratione accidentalis*, and their acts in *esse virtuoso simpliciter*. We believe this confusion arises from his not distinguishing between charity as the effective form of the virtues and the habit of charity as the efficient cause of the effective form.

As we said, it was only after charity conceived its own end that it commanded the other virtues to act because of that end. This command of charity was made effective through a form impressed upon the virtues by the act of charity commanding. The form impressed upon the virtues and not the act of charity commanding, and much less the habit from which the act of charity took its rise, constituted both the virtues and their acts as perfect virtues and perfect acts by referring them to the end *sub ratione finis*. And since charity is said to be the effective form of the virtues precisely in so far as it refers their acts to

¹³⁰Cf. our text, pages 25-26.

the ultimate end, it must be that the form impressed by charity, and not the act of charity nor the habit of charity, is the effective form of the virtues. But this form, as we have seen, is intrinsic and essential to the perfect virtues and their acts; and intrinsic but accidental to the true but imperfect virtue. Hence, the form impressed by charity must be termed the intrinsic and not the extrinsic effective form of the virtues. The act of charity which impresses the form, and the habit of charity from which the act takes its rise, are merely the extrinsic efficient causes of the impressed form which is itself the intrinsic effective form.

Further, we agree with the conclusion of the Salmanticenses that charity is the intrinsic effective form of the virtues, but we cannot agree with the process of reasoning by which they arrived at that conclusion, nor yet with their understanding of the effective form. For them charity is the intrinsic effective form in that from the very habit of charity antecedently to the act of charity commanding the virtues, some form is impressed upon the virtues by which they are made capable of eliciting meritorious acts.¹⁸¹ They give several reasons to show the fittingness of this view. First, the habits of inferior virtues should pre-contain the ordination to the end which is ultimately found in their elicited acts. Secondly, only in the manner just described can the virtues be said to be habitually *vivae et formatae*. And thirdly, only in this way can one account for the fact that even antecedently to the formal act of charity, an inferior virtue perfected by grace and the habit of charity, can elicit meritorious acts.¹⁸²

In this place we shall not reply in detail to the Salmanticenses. Their claim will be sufficiently answered by our presentation of Thomistic teaching in the next two chapters. It will be sufficient here to point out the following observations.

When they say the habit of virtue ought to precontain the ordination to the end found in their elicited acts,¹⁸³ it does not follow that such ordination must come from the habit of charity

¹⁸¹Cf. our text, pages 27-33.

¹⁸²Cf. our text, pages 33-35.

¹⁸³Cf. our text, page 33.

antecedently to the formal act of charity commanding. This would be true only if the form impressed by charity were as transitory as the formal act of charity by which it is impressed. But as we shall see, the form impressed by the formal act of charity commanding is habitual. Since, as we have seen, this form is impressed before the inferior virtue elicits its commanded act, the habit of inferior virtue does precontain the ordination to the ultimate end in the impressed form which refers their elicited acts to the end.

When they say that only if some intrinsic and real perfection flows from the habit of charity into the habits of the other virtues antecedently to the act of charity, can it be maintained that the virtues are habitually *vivae et formatae*¹³⁴—for the inferior virtues of even baptized infants must be termed *vivae et formatae*—they seem to identify what St. Thomas had distinguished: the ordination to informed acts, and the ordination to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis*. Let us recall the pertinent text in which St. Thomas describes the nature of charity as effective form.

However, it is evident according to what was said in the preceding article, that through charity the acts of all the other virtues are referred to the ultimate end; and in this way does it give the form to the acts of all the other virtues; and to this extent (*pro tanto*) is it said to be the form of the virtues; *for the virtues themselves are said to be in order to informed acts.*¹³⁵

Here the Angelic Doctor distinguishes between the information which orders the virtues to informed acts and the information which refers their acts to the ultimate end. And as we have seen, the reference to the end spoken of here is formal and explicit reference to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis*. It is further evident that the *imperium caritatis* commands virtues

¹³⁴Cf. our text, page 35.

¹³⁵II-II, q. 23, a. 8, corp. in med: *Manifestum est autem secundum praedicta, art. praec., quod per charitatem ordinantur actus omnium aliarum virtutum ad ultimum finem; et secundum hoc ipsa dat formam actibus omnium aliarum virtutum; et pro tanto dicitur esse forma virtutum; nam et ipsae virtutes dicuntur in ordine ad actus formatos.*

which are already ordered to informed acts. Consequently, that the virtues be habitually *vivae et formatae* in no way depends on the *imperium caritatis*, but is rather a condition which it supposes. Since the *imperium caritatis* supposes a virtue which is ordered to informed acts, the form impressed by the act of charity commanding must be distinct from the form by which the virtues are said to be in order to informed acts.

The Salmanticenses therefore, have wrongly concluded that the information by which the virtues are said to be ordered to informed acts, and the information by which the informed acts of virtue are referred to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis*, are one and the same information arising from one and the same source. If then we keep the two types of information in mind, and remember that the information which refers the acts of informed virtues to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis* presupposes and hence must be distinct from the information by which the virtues are said to be in order to informed acts, the difficulty proposed by the Salmanticenses vanishes.

It is true that since the virtues are said to be habitually informed even antecedently to the act of charity commanding, we must conclude that in some way they are *habitually ordered to informed acts* independently of the act of charity commanding. Even if it be true that this reference to informed acts is due to an intrinsic form arising from the habit of charity antecedently to the act of charity commanding, it does not follow that charity must be termed the intrinsic effective form in that from the very habit of charity antecedently to the act of charity, some form is impressed upon the virtues which refers their acts to the ultimate end. For, as we have seen, such a form does indeed order the virtues to informed acts, but over and above this, the form impressed by the act of charity commanding is required to refer the very informed acts to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis*. Hence, the form arising immediately from the habit of charity cannot be termed the intrinsic effective form of the virtues, for it orders the virtues to informed acts, but demands the form impressed by the act of charity commanding in order that these informed acts be referred to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis*.

Finally, when the Salmanticenses say their opinion must be

held in order to account for the fact that even prior to a formal act of charity, as in the case of a person justified through attrition and the Sacrament of Penance, a man can elicit meritorious acts, that is to presuppose this teaching on merit is the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor. However, as we shall see, these same authors themselves confess they are hard put to make the teaching of St. Thomas agree with what the Salmanticenses term the more common teaching of the theologians on this point. Further, it supposes that this view, the more common opinion in our own time, is the more correct. This, as we shall attempt to show in our third chapter, is hardly a necessary conclusion.

CHAPTER II

GRACE AND CHARITY AS THE FORM OF THE VIRTUES

St. Thomas speaks of both grace and charity as the form of the virtues. An exact knowledge of the teaching of the Angelic Doctor concerning this matter will clarify our understanding of what has preceded, and will help us grasp his doctrine on the more involved question of the influx of charity into the meritorious act.

ARTICLE I

THE VARIOUS OPINIONS

The teaching of the theologians on this point may be grouped under four schools of thought, represented respectively by Peter Lombard, Durandus, Scotus, and St. Thomas. In our own time only the opinions of Sotus and Thomas have any real importance.

Peter Lombard¹ taught that charity was to be called the form of the virtues in so far as charity was identical with the Holy Spirit. Durandus² denied that there was even a rational dis-

¹ Lombard, Peter, *Libri Sententiarum*, III, dist. 27, c. 3, p. 674: *Eadem sane dilectio, qua diligitur Deus et proximus, quae Spiritus Sanctus est, . . . quia Deus caritas est.* *Op cit., loc. cit.*, dist. 28, c. 9, p. 661: *Caritas enim Spiritus sanctus est.* Cf. also, *II Sent.* dist. 27: *unde apparent vere, quia charitas est Spiritus sanctus quae animae qualitates informat et sanctificat, ut eis anima informetur et sanctificetur, sine qua animae qualitas non dicitur virtus, quia non valet sanare animam.* Scotus, however, thinks the opinion of Lombard may be interpreted in a manner more in conformity with the general teaching of the theologians. Cf. *Reportata*, lib. I, dist. 17, q. 1, Scholion II, n. 8, p. 206.

² *D. Durandi in Petri Lombardi Sententias Theologicas Commentariorum Libri IIII*, lib. II, dist. 20, q. 1, p. 175.

tinction between charity and sanctifying grace; in his view they are absolutely identical.

Scotus³ and his followers, like Molina⁴, Vasquez⁵, Estius⁶, Bellarmine⁷, Lessius⁸, and Frassen⁹ teach that charity and grace

³ Scotus, D., *In II Sent. dist. 27, q. 1, n. 3, 4*: Ideo alia est opinio, quae attribuuntur gratiae et charitati, et e converso; utraque enim formaliter aequaliter dividit inter filios regni et perditionis, utraque est etiam forma virtutis, et neutra potest esse informis; utraque etiam conjungit ultimo fini perfecta conjunctione, qualis potest esse in via; et si poneretur distincta, altera superflueret, quia reliqua sufficeret. Et secundum hoc potest teneri opinio Magistri, . . . quod Spiritus sanctus, non per aliud habitum distinctum a charitate, movet voluntatem ad diligendum Deum meritorie, et distinctum ab illo habitu quo animam inhabitat, qui est gratia, et ipsa est charitas; et eodem habitu quo Spiritus sanctus inhabitat animam inclinatur voluntas in suum actum meritorium . . .

⁴ Molina, *Concordia Liberi Arbitrii*, q. 14, a. 13, disp. 38, p. 221: Quia tamen habitus infusus caritatis theologalis virtutis qui a gratia gratum faciente nostra sententia minime distinguitur . . .

⁵ Vasquez, *Commentariorum ac Disputationum In Totam Primam Secundae Sancti Thomae*, disp. 198, c. 1, n. 4: Cum igitur omnia quae Scholastici de gratia habituali praedicant, Scripturae sacrae de charitate etiam pronuncient, immerito sane aliquis contendit gratiam habitualem ab habitu charitatis distinguere.

⁶ Estius, William, *Sententiarum Commentaria in Quatuor Libros*, I, In II Sent. dist. 26, n. 4, p. 278; Nos in eam partem quae gratiam et charitatem sola ratione distinguit, tanquam veriorem adducemus argumenta quaedam praecipua . . .

⁷ Bellarmine, Robert, *Opera Omnia IV, (De Gratia)*, III Gen. Cont., I Princeps, lib. 1, c. 6, p. 279: Nam si proprie loqui velimus per charitatem, quam quisquis in se habet, non est alteri carus, sed habet alterum carum; est enim charitas virtus, qua diligimus, non qua diligimur, quamvis possit ipsa esse ratio, cur ab altero diligamur; amor enim amorem maxime provocat. Quare gratia, qua sumus Deo cari, sive grati, distinguitur saltem ratione a charitate, qua Deum habemus carum. Piores autem illae sententiae quae distinctionem realem aut formalem inter gratiam et charitatem ponebant, his argumentis refelluntur.

⁸ Lessius, L., *De Perfectionibus Moribusque Divinis*, lib. 12, n. 76.

⁹ Frassen, *Scotus Academicus*, VIII (De Divino Gratiae Beneficio et de Virtutibus) disp. 2, a. 1, q. 2. Cf. also De Coninck, Aegidius Bellanus, *De Actibus Supernaturalibus In Genere*, lib. 4 (De Caritate) disp. 21, dub. 7, n. 76, concl. p. 424; Probabilius est gratia justificantem non distingui ab habitu caritatis.

are really the same entity; they admit only a distinction of reason between the two. For them, therefore, sanctifying grace and charity form one operative habit. Hence, while this school of thought admits that charity is the form of the virtues, they must be understood to mean this only in the sense that charity is identified with grace which, as an operative habit, immediately, and not by any habit distinct from itself, refers the acts of all the virtues to the ultimate end.

St. Thomas¹⁰, Capreolus¹¹, Dionysius¹², Gregory of Valentia¹³, Ferrariensis¹⁴, Cajetan¹⁵, Suarez¹⁶, Sylvius¹⁷, Salmanticenses¹⁸,

¹⁰ *I-II*, q. 110, a. 3, corp: . . . quidam posuerunt idem esse gratiam et virtutem secundum essentiam, sed differe secundum rationem . . . Sed si quis recte consideret rationem virtutis, hoc stare non potest. *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 2, corp: Alii vero dicunt e contrario, quod caritas et gratia per essentiam differunt, nec aliqua virtus est gratia per essentiam: et haec opinio rationabilior videtur. Cf. *Op. cit.*, loc. cit., ad 2. *In II Sent.* dist. 26, q. 2, aa. 4, 6. *In IV Sent.* dist. 1, q. 1, a. 4; q. 5. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 151, pp. 444, 445.

¹¹ Capreolus, Johannes, *Defensiones Theologiae Divi Thomae Aquinatis*, In I Sent. dist. 17, q. 1, a. 1, concl. 3: Tertia conclusio est quod gratia gratum faciens realiter distinguitur a charitate, et ab omni virtute.

¹² Dionysius, *Summa Fidei Orthodoxae*, Opera XVII, lib. 2, a. 118, q. 110, pp. 326, 327.

¹³ De Valentia, Gregory, *Commentariorum Theologorum*, II, disp. 8, q. 2, punc. 2, col. 1126: Probabilior est sententia illa tertia quae gratiam et charitatem reipsa distinguit, et melioribus fundamentis nititur.

¹⁴ Ferrariensis, F. De Sylvestris, *Summa Contra Gentiles Cum Commentariis F. De S. Ferrariensis*, III, 151, pp. 444, 445.

¹⁵ Cajetan, Card. Thomas De Vio, *op. cit.*, In I-II, q. 110, a. 3.

¹⁶ Suarez, F., *Opera Omnia*, IX (De Habitibus Justitiae) III Pars, lib. 6, c. 12, n. 15, p. 75: Ultimo, ex dictis infertur gratiam non tantum ex natura rei formaliter, sed cum omni proprietate realiter a charitate distingui.

¹⁷ Sylvius, F., *Commentarius In Totam Primam Secundae D. Thomae*, q. 110, a. 3, concl. 2, p. 566: Probabilius est quod gratia sit habitus realiter a charitate diversus.

¹⁸ Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, IX, tr. 14, (De Gratia Dei) disp. 4, dub. 5, n. 77, p. 560: Dicendum est gratiam, et charitatem distingui realiter.

John of St. Thomas¹⁹, Ripalda²⁰ and others²¹ teach that charity is really distinct from sanctifying grace, and that charity as an operative habit really distinct from grace, an entitative habit, ordinates the acts of all the virtues to the ultimate end.

ARTICLE II

THE SCOTISTIC OPINION

Scotus lays down as a fundamental principle that entities are not to be multiplied without necessity. The same effects, he says, are attributed to grace and to charity. Therefore grace and charity must be really the same entity.

There is another opinion which says that grace is formally a virtue, which is charity; and any perfections attributed to grace [are also] attributed to charity, and vice versa; each formally equally divide between the sons of the kingdom and the sons of perdition . . . each is a form of virtue, and neither can be uninformed; each unites to the ultimate end by a perfect conjunction, in so far as is possible *in via*; and if a distinction were made, one would be superfluous, for the other would suffice . . . The Holy Spirit moves the will to love God meritoriously not through another habit distinct from charity, and distinct from that habit by which It inhabits the soul,

¹⁹ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus*, VI, q. 110, a. 2, n. 7, p. 798.

²⁰ Ripalda, *De Ente Supernaturali*, I Pars, lib. 6, disp. 132, sect. 4, nn. 66, 67: Sententiam, quae affirmat justitiam habitualem a caritate realiter distingui, velut primariam et substantialem formam a sua proprietate et potentia, docent D. Thomas, Antonius, Alexander, Caietanus, Conradus, Ferrar, Argentinas, Capreolus, . . . Soto . . . quos refert et sequitur Suarez . . . Cui ego sententiae libenter subscribo, etiam si opposita probabilis sit. Tum quia his temporibus communior est et expressa S. Thomae. Tum quia probabilius ducitur fundamentis.

²¹ Cf. Bonaventure, *In IV Sent.* dist. 17, p. 1, q. 3. *In II Sent.* dist. 26, dub. 2; dist. 27, a. 1, q. 2. Philip of the Most Holy Trinity, *De gratia Dei*, disp. 5, dub. 2. Medina, *In I-II*, q. 110, a. 3. Becanus, Martinus, *Summa Theologiae Scholasticae*, (De Gratia) tr. 4, c. 1. Wiggers, *Commentaria in Primam Secundae D. Thomae*, II, q. 110, a. 3.

which is grace, and this [grace] is charity; and by the same habit the will is inclined to its meritorious act.²²

In elaborating this argument Frassen appeals to Sacred Scripture to prove that the same effects are attributed to charity as are predicated of grace.

- 1) *Adoptive filiation and divine generation:* Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are.²³
- 2) *Man is made pleasing and beloved of God:* You are my friends if you do the things I command you.²⁴
- 3) *It confers spiritual life:* We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.²⁵
- 4) *It is the font, origin, and root of all the virtues:* If I should speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have charity, I have become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I have prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, yet do not have charity, I am nothing. And if I distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, yet do not have charity, it profits me nothing.²⁶
- 5) *It unites us intimately to God:* God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.²⁷
- 6) *It is the seed of eternal life:* Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been

²² Scotus, *op. cit., loc. cit.* Quotation *ut supra*.

²³ I John 3, 1.

²⁴ John 15, 14-15.

²⁵ I John 3, 14-15.

²⁶ I Cor. 13, 1-3.

²⁷ I John 4, 16.

held in order to account for the fact that even prior to a formal act of charity, as in the case of a person justified through attrition and the Sacrament of Penance, a man can elicit meritorious acts, that is to presuppose this teaching on merit is the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor. However, as we shall see, these same authors themselves confess they are hard put to make the teaching of St. Thomas agree with what the Salmanticenses term the more common teaching of the theologians on this point. Further, it supposes that this view, the more common opinion in our own time, is the more correct. This, as we shall attempt to show in our third chapter, is hardly a necessary conclusion.

of reason
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mediately, and
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ry of Valentia¹⁸,
Salmanticenses¹⁸,

ant idem esse gratiam et
in rationem . . . Sed si quis
potest. *De Veritate*, q. 27,
charitas et gratia per essentiam
per essentiam: et haec opinio
ad 2. In II Sent. dist. 26,
ad 4; q. 5. Summa Contra Gentiles,

s Theologiae Divi Thomae Aquinatis,
concl. 3: Tertia conclusio est quod gratia
venitur a charitate, et ab omni virtute.
Orthodoxae, Opera XVII, lib. 2, a. 118,

Commentariorum Theologorum, II, disp. 8,
probabilior est sententia illa tertia quae gratiam
sequitur, et melioribus fundamentis nititur.

*Sylvestris, Summa Contra Gentiles Cum Com-
mentariensis*, III, 151, pp. 444, 445.

Thomas De Vio, *op. cit.*, In I-II, q. 110, a. 3.

Opera Omnia, IX (De Habitibus Justitiae) III Pars,
p. 75: Ultimo, ex dictis infertur gratiam non tantum
formaliter, sed cum omni proprietate realiter a charitate

F., *Commentarius In Totam Primam Secundae D. Thomae*,
concl. 2, p. 566: Probabilius est quod gratia sit habitus realiter
te diversus.

ollegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, IX, tr. 14, (De Gratia Dei) disp. 4,
n. 77, p. 560: Dicendum est gratiam, et charitatem distingui realiter.

tried, he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him.²⁸

To this Bellarmine adds that even conceding that grace gives to the soul a supernatural *esse*, it does not follow that grace and charity must be really distinct, for this supernatural *esse* which comes through a rebirth or regeneration is also attributed to charity in Sacred Scripture.

In their opinion, in order that it [grace] be distinguished from charity, they wish grace to be a proper *esse*, and to give to the soul some supernatural *esse*, because of which a man may be called a son of God and a partaker of the divine nature by participation. But all Scripture most clearly attributes this [effect] to charity. I John 3, 1. *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are.* And in chapter 4, 7. *And everyone who loves is born of God . . .*

Besides, man receives that supernatural *esse* when he is regenerated and reborn, and is made a new creature. That this is brought about through charity is proved from the Scriptures: The seed from which we are regenerated is the word of God. I Peter 1, 23. *For you have been reborn, not from corruptible seed but from incorruptible, through the word of God who lives and abides forever.* And James 1, 10. *Of his*

²⁸ James 1, 12. Cf. Frassen, *Scotus Academicus*, Disp. 2, a. 1, q. 2, VIII, p. 179. Vasquez, *Commentariorum ac Disputationum In Totam Primam Secundae Sancti Thome*, disp. 198, c. 1, n. 4: Cum igitur omnia quae Scholastica de gratia habitualis praedicant, Scripturae sacrae de caritate etiam pronuncient, immerito sane aliquis contendit gratiam habitualem ab habitu charitatis distinguere. Bellarmine, *Opera IV (De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio) III Gen. Contr.*, I Princ. Contr. lib. 1, c. 6, p. 280: Tertium argumentum peti potest ex divinis literis, in quibus videmus ea omnia tribui charitati, quae ab auctoribus contrariae sententiae tribuuntur gratiae, non solum absolute, sed etiam distingui, ut ipsi docent, a charitate. Profecto autem si in charitatem, secundum Scripturas, conveniunt ea omnia quae soli gratiae jure solent, alterum necesse est, vel in Scripturis falsam doctrinam, quae fieri non potest, contineri, vel, quod nos contendimus, gratiam a charitate nullo modo, aut sola ratione distingui.

own will he has begotten us by the word of truth, that we might be, as it were, the first fruits of his creatures. The word, however, properly gives birth in us to a living faith which works through charity, according to Romans 10, 17. *Faith then depends on hearing, and hearing on the word of Christ.* A living faith, that is, faith with charity, which is to say [the faith] through which we are reborn, and therefore it [charity] gives that divine and supernatural *esse*, by reason of which we are called sons of God.²⁹

The proof we have just outlined seems to be the fundamental argument advanced by those who, like Scotus, teach only a rational distinction between grace and charity. They maintain further that their opinion is more in conformity with the teaching of the Council of Trent as found in its decrees and canons on justification. In interpreting the decrees of the Council they say the Fathers did not actually choose between the two principal schools when treating of the cause of justification and its mode, but that their choice of wording clearly favors the Scotistic teaching. Some even say that were the words of the Council interpreted in any other way, one would be accusing the conciliar Fathers of grave neglect in a serious matter. We shall appeal to Frassen and Bellarmine for a presentation of the Scotistic position.

²⁹ Bellarmine, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*: *Gratia proprium esse volunt, ut a charitate ipsorum opinione distinguitur, dare animae quoddam esse supernaturale, ex quo dicatur homo filius Dei per participationem et divinae consors naturae.* Id vero totum Scriptura apertissime tribuit charitati, I. Joan. 3. *Videte qualem charitatem dedit nobis Pater, ut filii Dei nominemur, et simus.* Et cap. 4. *Omnis quid diligit, ex Deo natus est . . .*

Praeterea tunc accipit homo illud esse supernaturale cum regeneratur ac renascitur, novaque efficitur creatura. Id autem fieri per charitatem ex Scripturis, ita probatur: Semen ex quo regeneramur, est verbum Dei. I Petri 1. *Renati non ex semine corruptibili, sed ex incorruptibili per verbum Dei vivi.* Et Jacobi 1. *Genuit nos verbo veritatis, ut simus initium aliquod creaturae ejus.* Verbum autem proprie fidem in nobis gignit eamque vivam, quae per dilectionem operatur, ad Rom. 10. *Fides ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum Christi.* Fides igitur viva, idest, cum charitate, est id, per quod renascimur, et proinde ipsa dat illud esse divinum et supernaturale, unde dicimus filii Dei.

Frassen claims that the Council uses the words charity and grace interchangeably, and that it attributes sanctification to charity, naming it as the formal cause of justification. For this reason charity, he says, cannot be really distinct from sanctifying grace.

Though no one can be just except he to whom the merits of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ are communicated, yet this takes place in that justification of the sinner, when by the merit of the most holy passion, *the charity of God is poured forth by the Holy Ghost in the hearts* of those who are justified, and inheres in them. From these words no one will doubt that by *charity*, sanctifying grace is understood; both because all Catholic Doctors from the use of the words *inherent* and *diffunditur* in this connection deduce that sanctifying grace is an intrinsic and permanent form: and because in this place the Council is treating of the formal cause of justification, which is sanctifying grace itself.³⁰

To strengthen his interpretation of the words of the Council, Frassen is at pains to seek confirmation from the same session, and from the canons related to it.

Moreover, the same Council confirms this in the following words for it adds: *whence man through Jesus Christ, in whom he is ingrafted, receives in that justification, together with the remission of sins, all these infused at the same time, namely, faith, hope and charity.* Now if some other form besides charity, faith, and hope were to be desired for justification, the

³⁰ Frassen, *Scotus Academicus*, VIII, disp. 2, a. 1, q. 2, p. 180: Quamquam enim nemo possit esse justus, nisi cui merita Passionis Domini nostri Jesu Christi, id tamen in hac impii justificatione fit, dum ejusdem sanctissimae Passionis merito per Spiritum sanctum *charitas Dei, diffunditur in cordibus eorum, qui justificantur, atque ipsis inhaeret.* Quibus verbis nemo dubitabit nomine *charitatis* gratiam sanctificantem intelligi; tum quia omnes Catholici Doctores ex verbis *inhaeret*, et *diffunditur* hic positis, colligunt gratiam sanctificantem esse formam intrinsecam, ac permanentem: tum ibi Concilium agit de causa formalis justificationis, quae est ipsa gratia sanctificans. Cf. Bellarmine, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

Council would hardly have been silent about it, especially since the propositions of this chapter have made no mention of the three virtues, save in so far as all three or some one of them was the justifying form. Chapter ten makes this even more evident when it says: *This increase of justice holy Church asks for when she prays: "Give unto us, O Lord, an increase of faith, hope, and charity."* Without doubt, it [the Council] is speaking of an increase of the formal cause of justification; and afterwards it uses faith, hope, and charity [to signify] sanctifying grace, namely, in so far as faith and hope are vivified by charity.³¹

The argument from the canon related to this decree is principally grammatical.

Finally, the mind of the Council is clearly deduced from the eleventh canon of this same session, where condemning him who shall say that *men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of grace and charity*, lest it would seem to distinguish grace from charity, subjoins in the singular number:—*which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost and remains in them*; by which [words] it [the Council] signifies that it is speaking of one and the same habit; no grammarian would say, Peter and John *walks*, but *walk*, for they are two really distinct [persons:] therefore when the Council speaks in the

³¹ *Ibid*: *Insuper, hoc ipsum confirmat Concilium verbis sequentibus, subjicit enim: Unde in ipsa justificatione cum remissione peccatorum haec omnia simul infusa accipit homo per Jesum Christum, cui inseritur per fidem, spem, et charitatem: si enim aliqua alia forma praeter charitatem, fidem, et spem ad justificationem desideraretur, haud dubie eam Concilium non tacuisset, maxime cum prepositum istius capitis non fuerit mentionem de illis tribus virtutibus facere, nisi quatenus vel omnes tres, vel aliqua ex illis erat forma justificans. Quod evidentius aperit cap. 10. dicens: Hoc vero justitiae incrementum petit sancta Ecclesia cum orat: Da nobis fidei, spei et charitatis augmentum. Ubi procul dubio sermonem facit de incremento causae formalis justificationis; subindeque fidem, spem, et charitatem pro gratia sanctificante usurpat, quatenus videlicet fides, et spes per charitatem vivificantur.*

singular of grace and charity, it is a sign that it intends them to be not really distinct.³²

Further, in Frassens' opinion, to hold that the effects proper to grace are attributed to grace and to charity in an essentially different manner, to grace as to the formal and root cause, to charity as to the operative principle, itself the fruit of grace, goes directly against the language used by the Council, and even seems to accuse the Council of reprehensible ambiguity in matters of extreme importance.

Moreover, although sometimes the effect of one cause is attributed to another [cause] inseparably joined to it, speaking oratorically, and after the manner of metonymy, it must never be thought to be done when there is question of handing down a teaching concerning things which must be believed: for no less a vice would be imputed to the Church than to the philosophers if, while it makes known the causes and properties of things, it would assign other causes and properties which are suited to things intimately conjoined to themselves: but the Tridentine Council, . . . after collecting from Sacred Scripture the teaching concerning the dispositions, causes and effects of justification, explains this to be charity, and speaks of it [charity] together with sanctifying grace in the singular, as of one habit; therefore the Council truly thinks that charity and sanctifying grace have the same effects, not because of their connection and inseparability, but because of [their] identity.³³

³² *Ibid.*: Denique, Concilii mens aperte colligitur ex Canone undecimo ejusdem Sessionis, ubi damnans eum, qui dixerit, *homines justificari, vel sola imputatione justitiae Christi, vel sola peccatorum remissione, exclusa gratia et charitate*, ne videantur gratiam a charitate discernere, subjungit numero singulari: *Quae in cordibus eorum per Spiritum sanctum diffundatur, atque illis inhaeret*: quibus significat se de uno, eodemque habitu loqui; nullus Grammaticus diceret, Petrus et Joannes ambulant, sed ambulant, quia sunt duo realiter distincti: ergo cum Concilium in singulari de gratia et charitate loquatur, signum est, quod intendat eas non esse realiter distinctas.

³³ *Ibid.*: Adde quod etiamsi interdum effectus unius causae tribueretur alteri ipsi inseparabiliter conjunctae, loquendo oratorie, et per quamdam

Finally, Frassen will not allow that the effects proper to grace are to be attributed to charity as to the partial formal cause of justification, for this would directly contradict the Council of Trent.

The one formal cause of justification, it [the Council] says, is the justice of God, not [that] by which He himself is just, but [that] by which He makes us just; therefore the Council does not think there is a twofold, distinct formal cause of justification; otherwise it would have assigned this twofold formal cause, just as in the same place it assigns the several final causes of this same justification, namely, the glory of God, of Christ, and eternal life. Moreover, even among the formal causes the effect of one [cause] is not attributed to another distinct [cause] but the effects of sanctifying grace are assigned to charity.³⁴

From among the Fathers the followers of Scotus choose Augustine as their authority. The texts upon which their argument is based are the following.

metonymiam, numquam id fieri putandum est, cum agitur de tradenda doctrina rerum credendarum: non enim minus vitio verteretur Ecclesiae, quam Philosophis, si cum causas et proprietates rerum aperit, alias assignaret, quae rebus ipsis intime conjunctis competenter: sed Concilium Tridentinum . . . colligendo ex Scriptura sacra doctrinam de dispositionibus, causis, et effectibus justificationis, explicat hanc esse charitatem, et de illa sumpta cum gratia sanctificante loquitur in singulari tamquam de unico habitu: ergo censet Concilium revera charitatem, et gratiam sanctificantem eosdem habere effectus, non propter connexionem earum et inseparabilitatem, sed propter identitatem.

³⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 181: *Unica, inquit, formalis causa justificationis est justitia Dei, non qua ipse justus est, sed qua nos justos facit: ergo Concilium non censet duplicem esse justificationis causam formalem distinctam; alias enim hanc duplicem causam formalem assignasset, sicut varias ibidem assignat causas finales ejusdem justificationis, nempe gloriam Dei, et Christi, ac vitam aeternam. Adde quod etiam in causis formalibus partialibus unius effectus non tribuitur alteri distinctae, quemadmodum effectus gratiae sanctificantis charitati assignantur.*

Charity is the most true, most full and most perfect justice.

Justice is the great and especially praiseworthy virtue of the soul . . . I have effected justice and judgment. By the name of justice in this place, not the virtue itself, but its work is signified; for who makes justice in a man except him who justifies the impious, that is, through grace makes a just man of an impious one? Hence the Apostle says we are freely justified through his grace. Therefore, he does justice, that is, the work of justice.

Commenting on this text, Bellarmine argues as follows. That justice by which we are justified is a divinely infused virtue by which we perform good works; it is therefore not in the essence of the soul, but a habit of virtue in an operative potency.

In this place St. Augustine most clearly teaches that the justice by which we are justified by God, is a divinely infused virtue, through which we perform just works; therefore he does not wish it to be some habit in the essence of the soul which does not act, but a habit of virtue in an operative potency.³⁵

The following argument *ex convenientia* is the final confirmatory argument advanced by the followers of Scotus in favor of their opinion. According to them, if one were to admit the real distinction between grace and charity, it would follow that once charity were lost, the supernatural virtue of faith could not remain. Nor does it solve the question to claim that faith

³⁵ Bellarmine, *Opera* IV (De Gratia et libero arbitrio) III Gen. Contr., I Princ. Contr. lib. 1, c. 6, p. 280: Quo loco St. Augustius apertissime docet justitiam, qua justificamur a Deo, esse virtutem divinitus infusam, per quam operamur opera justa; proinde non vult esse habitum aliquem in essentia animae, qui nihil operetur, sed habitum virtutis in potentia operatrice. Cf. *Op. cit.*, p. 281: Per gratiam formaliter justificamur; et justitia communi consensu theologorum et philosophorum, virtus animi est, et in voluntate, non in essentia animae sedem habet. Cf. Frassen, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

would remain but that it would be *fides informis*. For then it could not attain its perfection, for the light by which it is perfected, grace, would no longer exist in the soul. This can be clearly seen in the case of the naturally acquired virtues no one of which can remain a virtue if the natural habitude towards which it tends is destroyed. Thus argues Scotus.³⁶

Bellarmines' teaching on this point is in perfect agreement with Scotus and is perhaps more clearly put:

. . . If that grace [sanctifying] were distinguished from charity and the other infused virtues as the soul is distinguished from the potencies, or the light of reason from the virtues . . . it would follow that grace having been lost by sin, all the infused virtues would be lost, just as when the soul perishes, necessarily its potencies perish, and without the light of reason no virtues at all are conserved in the soul; but infused faith does not perish when grace is lost, as all Catholics admit; therefore faith is not distinguished from nor does it depend on *gratia gratum faciens*, that it be distinguished as the potencies depend on the soul and the virtues on the light of reason.

Nor will he satisfy [us] by [this] argument, if someone should say, that when grace is lost, faith remains but not perfected and informed, and in this manner only does it depend on the habit of grace. For although faith is imperfect and uninformed without grace, it is nevertheless a supernatural habit: however, St. Thomas teaches that there cannot be a supernatural habit, nor supernatural operations in the soul, unless

³⁶ Scotus, *Opera XIII*, In II Sent. dist. 27, q. 1, pp. 247, 248: Opinio fuit his aliquando, gratia est quoddam lumen supernaturale, se habens ad virtutes Theologicas, sicut lumen naturale ad virtutes acquisitas, sicut anima ponitur idem suis potentiis; vel ergo gratia esset radix earum, vel illae tres perficerent in ordine ad lumen supernaturale, quod est gratia, sicut virtutes acquisitae perficiunt in ordine ad lumen naturale.

Sed ex hoc sequeretur quod fides non posset manere informis, quia non posset perficere, non manente illo lumine in ordine ad quod perficit, sicut nec virtus acquisita potest manere virtus, non manente habitudine ejus naturali ad illud quod respicit, ut ad lumen quod est prudentia.

this same soul has first been elevated to some supernatural *esse* through the habit of grace, since operation demands the previous existence of an *esse*.³⁷

Grace must, therefore, be considered a virtue identical with charity. And the Holy Spirit through charity, and not through any virtue distinct from it, moves the will to love God meritoriously. And by force of that very habit by which the Holy Spirit dwells in the soul, which is grace, the will is inclined towards the meritorious act. However, it is not by force of this same habit, grace, that we believe and hope, but by other imperfect habits, for these acts of faith and hope require some imperfection.

There is another opinion which says that grace is formally a virtue which is charity . . . The Holy Spirit moves the will to love God meritoriously, not through some habit distinct from charity, and distinct from that habit by which It inhabits the soul, which is grace, and this itself [grace] is charity; and by the very same habit by which the Holy Spirit inhabits the soul is the will inclined towards its meritorious act; not, however, by that same habit by which the Holy Spirit inhabits [the soul] does one believe and hope all

³⁷ Bellarmine, *Op. cit.*, p. 281: . . . si gratia ista distingueretur a charitate, caeterisque infusis virtutibus, quemadmodum distinguitur anima a potentiis, vel lumen rationis a virtutibus, . . . sequeretur amissa gratia per peccatum, simul amitti virtutes omnes infusas, sicut pereunte anima, pereunt necessario ejus potentiae, et sine lumine rationis nullae omnino virtutes in anima conservantur; at fides infusa non perit gratia recedente, ut catholici omnes fatentur; non igitur distinguitur, neque pendet fides a gratia gratum faciente, ut distinguuntur, ac pendent potentiae ab anima et virtutes a lumine rationis.

Neque vero satisfaciet argumento, si quis dixerit, amissa gratia remanere quidem fidem, sed non perfectam et formatam, et hoc modo solum manare eam, ac dependere ab habitu gratiae. Nam quamvis sine gratia fides imperfecta atque informis sit, est tamen habitus supernaturalis, et operationem habet supernaturalem; docuit autem St. Thomas, non posse esse in anima habitus supernaturales, et operationes supernaturales, nisi antea evicta esset eadem anima ad esse quoddam supernaturale per habitum gratiae, cum operatio praerequirat esse. Cf. Frassen, *op. cit.*, pp. 182, 183.

things, but by other imperfect habits, for the acts of those habits require imperfection.³⁸

While Scotus does not admit a real distinction between charity and grace, for the reasons we have already explained, he and his followers do teach a distinction of reason between them, for charity is a perfection *simpliciter simplex*, which is formally in God, while grace is not a perfection *simpliciter simplex*, and therefore may not be predicated formally to God.

But from this there seems to follow some distinction between grace and charity, for charity is a perfection *simpliciter*, otherwise it could not formally be predicated of God, who, according to John, is charity; grace, however, is not a perfection *simpliciter*, nor is it formally placed in God.³⁹

Scotus gives the following explanation of his view. One is said to have charity in so far as he has God as dear to himself; it looks to God not under the aspect of the One loving, but rather in so far as He is lovable. Grace, on the other hand, is that because of which something is pleasing to God, and it looks to God as accepting, or as being complacent, or as loving, not, however, as beloved. Further, something is called grace not because God *loves*, but rather because God *accepts* the one having grace as worthy of beatitude which is in proportion to merit. Therefore grace by its very nature imports some imperfection,

³⁸ Scotus, *Op. cit.*, In II Sent. dist. 27, q. 1, nn. 3, 4. pp. 248, 249: Ideo alia est opinio, quae dicit quod gratia formaliter est virtus, quae est charitas . . . Spiritus sanctus, non per alium habitum distinctum a charitate, movet voluntatem ad diligendum Deum meritorie, et distinctum ab illo habitu quo animam inhabitat, qui est gratia, et ipsa est charitas; et eodem habitu quo Spiritus sanctus inhabitat anima, inclinatur voluntas in suum actum meritorium; non sic autem eodem habitu quo Spiritus sanctus inhabitat, credit omnia et sperat, sed aliis habitibus imperfectis, quia actus istorum habituum requirunt imperfectionem.

³⁹ Scotus, *Op. cit.*, p. 249: Sed ex hoc videtur sequi distinctio inter gratiam et charitatem, quia charitas est perfectio simpliciter, alias enim non formaliter competenter Deo, qui secundum Joannem est charitas; gratia autem non est perfectio simpliciter, nec formaliter ponitur in Deo.

for while exigitive of a reward or a dignity, it is by that very fact an admission of the lack of perfection, namely, that the individual having grace is not *beatus per se*.

Charity is called that by which he possessing it regards God as dear, so that it looks to God not under the ratio of the One loving, but under the *ratio* of the One who is loveable; grace is that by which God has someone as pleasing so that it looks to God as accepting or loving, not however, as beloved; however, not anything on account of which God loves is called grace . . . But that on account of which God accepts the one having it [grace] as worthy of happiness, dignity, which is in the relationship (*correspondentia*) of merit to reward, that is called grace, and so that which is grace includes some imperfection, for such a dignity places some imperfection in the one who is worthy, since he is not blessed *per se*.⁴⁰

Therefore, although that by which we love God as our object, and that through which we are accepted by God and ordained to beatitude is really one and the same thing, nonetheless, the aspect under which each looks to God is different, for charity is a perfection *simpliciter simplex*, and grace is a limited perfection.

So we can concede that although the entity be the same in the soul through which the soul loves God as object, and through which it [the soul] is accepted by God with a special acceptance, and is ordained to beatitude, nevertheless, one and another *ratio* is in this entity, in so far as it looks to God under diverse aspects; and the first *ratio*, the principal one, is proper

⁴⁰ *Ibid*: Respondeo, charitas dicitur, qua habens eam habet Deum charum, ita quod respicit Deum non in ratione diligentis, sed in ratione diligibilis; gratia est, qua Deus habet aliquem gratum, ita quod ipsa respicit Deum acceptantem sive diligentem, non autem dilectum; non autem dicitur gratia quocumque propter quod Deus diligit . . . Sed illud propter quod Deus acceptat habentem, ut dignum beatitudine, dignitate, quae est in correspondentia meriti ad praemium, illud dicitur gratia, et ita aliquam imperfectionem includit illud quod est gratia, quia talis dignitas aliquam imperfectionem ponit in digno, quia non est per se beatus.

to it in so far as it is a perfection *simpliciter*; the other *ratio* is proper to it in so far as it is a limited perfection; and so appropriately, according to the first [ratio] it is charity, and according to the second [ratio] it is called grace, so that every grace is charity, but not *e converso*.⁴¹

Charity also differs from grace by reason of the different connotation proper to each. This perfection is called charity in so far as it is considered in the one having the principle of operation, and so it is predicated of God. It can also be considered as specifying God's action, or in so far as it makes one the object of God's action, which is his good pleasure, and in this sense it is called grace.

They differ also by reason of the thing connoted, for that entity can be considered as it is possessed by the one having the principle of operation, and thus it does not bespeak an imperfection, and can be in God, and is called charity. It can also be considered as the object of God in me, in so far as God has me as pleasing, and so it determines the object, and is called grace, nevertheless, it is really the same thing.⁴²

It is now evident that while admitting a rational distinction between them, Scotus and his followers teach a real identity between grace and charity; for them, grace and charity are really the same habit. Further, Scotus maintains that the will is moved

⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 249, 250: Sic ergo possumus concedere, quod licet idem absolutum sit in anima, per quod anima diligit Deum ut objectum, et per quod acceptatur speciali acceptatione a Deo, et ordinatur ad beatitudinem, tamen alia et alia ratio est in isto absoluto, inquantum sic et sic respicit Deum; et una ratio prima, scilicet principalis, competit sibi inquantum est perfectio simpliciter; alia competit sibi ut est perfectio limitata; et ita appropriate secundum primam est charitas, quoad secundam dicitur gratia, et ut sic omnis gratia est charitas, licet non *e converso*.

⁴² *Ibid.*: Different etiam in ratione connati, quia illud absolutum potest considerari ut est habenti principium operandi, et sic non dicit imperfectionem, et potest esse in Deo, et dicitur charitas. Potest etiam considerari ut objectum Dei est in me, prout Deus habet me gratum, et sic determinat objectum, et dicitur gratia, est tamen idem re.

to a meritorious act by the habit of charity, which is grace, and not by any habit distinct from it. Therefore, when Scotus and his followers teach that charity is the form of the virtues, they must be interpreted to mean that this is so only in so far as charity, identical with grace, is an operative habit, immediately ordinating the acts of all the virtues to the ultimate end which is God, the Supreme Good.⁴³

ARTICLE III

THE THOMISTIC OPINION

When he wrote, St. Thomas was well aware of the dispute concerning the relationship existing between charity and sanctifying grace. He himself admits the probability of the opinion which holds that grace and charity are only rationally distinct; but he preferred and taught the opinion which maintains they are really distinct entities.⁴⁴

The general argument of St. Thomas may be phrased in the following manner. Basing his definition of virtue on that given by Aristotle, the Angelic Doctor defines it thus: *a virtue is some disposition of a perfect [thing] : I call that perfect which is disposed according to nature.*⁴⁵ The Angelic Doctor immediately concludes that since a virtue is disposed according to nature—another way of saying that the acts of the virtue are necessarily proportionate to the nature—the nature must necessarily precede the virtue. Since the nature precedes the virtue it must be really distinct from virtue. But grace is analogously the nature in the supernatural order. Therefore grace is really distinct from virtue. And since charity is a virtue, grace must be really distinct from charity. To this argument from reason, St. Thomas adds the confirmation given, in his opinion, by certain texts from Scripture and St. Augustine.

⁴³ Scotus, *op. cit.*, In II Sent. dist. 27, q. 1, nn. 3, 4, pp. 248, 249. Quotation *ut supra*.

⁴⁴ Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 2, corp. In II Sent. dist. 26, a. 1, a. 4, Sol.

⁴⁵ I-II, q. 110, a. 3, corp: *Virtus est quaedam dispositio perfecti: dico autem perfectum, quod est dispositum secundum naturam.*

A. The Definition of Virtue

In a previous part of this study we have seen the teaching of St. Thomas on virtue. There we learned that he spoke of the *virtus vera imperfecta*, and the *virtus simpliciter vera*, or perfect virtue. The *virtus vera imperfecta*, we recall, was a virtue ordained to some real *particular* good. The *virtus simpliciter vera* was a virtue ordained to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis*; it demanded the *imperium caritatis*, and its acts were meritorious.⁴⁶ In making this distinction St. Thomas had in mind the relation of the virtue to the end. But in this present discussion the Angelic Doctor is investigating the relationship existing between the virtue and its source, which is the nature. From this point of view, it is fundamental to the very notion of virtue that it be proportionate to its nature, for as St. Thomas says, *it is disposed according to nature*. This is the pivotal concept in the Angelic Doctor's proof of his position. Further, a clear understanding of his acceptation of virtue in this discussion will help us understand better why the fact that hope and charity can exist and can execute supernatural acts without charity, did not deter him from adhering firmly to his position that charity and grace are really distinct.

B. Nature Precedes Virtue

Having given his definition of virtue, St. Thomas now shows that, as a necessary consequence of the definition, the nature must precede virtue. He gives two general statements of the fact, and then makes a particular application to charity. The first statement is found in the *Summa*.

Some have put it that grace and virtue are the same according to essence, and differ only according to reason . . . But if anyone rightly considers the nature of a virtue, this cannot stand, for, as the Philosopher says in 7 Physic., text. 17, *a virtue is a certain disposition of a perfect [thing]: I call perfect, what is*

⁴⁶Cf. our text, pages 1-5.

disposed according to nature. From which it is evident that the virtue of any thing is said to be in order to some pre-existing nature, namely, when it [the virtue] is so disposed as to be proportionate to the nature.⁴⁷

In the treatise *De Veritate* there is a more lengthy, descriptive, but very enlightening passage which states the same truth.

For the attainment of any end in natural things three things are required: namely, a nature proportioned to that end; and an inclination to that end, which is the natural appetite of the end; and motion into the end: . . . Man, however, according to his nature is proportioned to a certain end for which he has a natural appetite; and he can act to attain that end with his natural powers, which end is a certain contemplation of divine things such as is possible to man according to the faculty of nature, in which the philosophers have placed the ultimate happiness of man. But there is another end for which man is prepared by God exceeding the proportion of human nature; namely, eternal life, which exceeds the proportion of any created nature and is connatural to God alone: hence, it is necessary that man be given something not only through which he acts with reference to the end, or through which his appetite is inclined to that end, but [something] through which his very nature is elevated to a certain dignity according to which such an end is suited to it; and for this there is given grace; to incline the affection to this end, however, charity is given; for performing the works by which the aforementioned end is acquired the other virtues are given . . . And that this comparison [between the natural and supernatural order] is correctly made is evident

⁴⁷ *I-II*, q. 110, a. 3, corp: Quidam posuerunt idem esse gratiam et virtutem secundum essentiam, sed differre solum secundum rationem; . . . Sed si quis recte consideret rationem virtutis, hoc stare non potest, quia, ut Philosophus dicit in 7 Physic., text. 17, *virtus est quaedam dispositio perfecti: dico autem perfectum, quod est dispositum secundum naturam*. Ex quo patet quod virtus uniuscujusque rei dicitur in ordine ad aliquam naturam prae-existentem, quando scilicet unumquodque sic est dispositum, secundum quod congruit suaee naturae.

from Dionysius in the second chapter of the *Celestial Hierarchy* where he says that someone cannot have a spiritual operation, just as [he cannot have] the act of any nature unless he first have an *esse* in that nature.⁴⁸

From these quotations it is evident that St. Thomas teaches the necessity of a supernatural nature which is grace preceding the virtues in order that their acts may be proportionate to the nature of man. Having stated the necessity for the pre-existence of a nature for the virtues in general, St. Thomas now specifically mentions the necessity of such a pre-existence for the virtue of charity in particular.

Since charity denotes a certain inclination of the appetite toward the supernatural good, which inclination indeed is not proportionate to the *esse naturae*, it is necessary that a certain spiritual *esse* be understood [to exist] in the soul prior to charity through which

⁴⁸ *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 2, corp: . . . ad consecutionem alicujus finis in rebus naturalibus tria praeexiguntur; scilicet natura proportionata ad finem illum, et inclinatio ad finem illum, quae est naturalis appetitus finis, et motus in finem: . . . Homo autem secundum naturam suam proportionatus est ad quemdam finem, cuius habet naturalem appetitum; et secundum naturales vires operari potest ad consecutionem illius finis, qui finis est aliqua contemplatio divinorum, qualis est homini possibilis secundum facultatem naturae, in qua philosophi ultimam hominis felicitatem posuerunt. Sed est aliquis finis ad quem homo a Deo praeparatur, naturae humanae proportionem excedens; scilicet vita aeterna, quae consistit in visione Deo per essentiam, quae excedit proportionem cuiuslibet naturae creatae, soli Deo connaturalis existens: unde oportet quod homini detur aliquid, non solum per quod operetur ad finem, vel per quod inclinetur ejus appetitus in finem illum; sed per quod ipsa natura hominis elevetur ad quamdam dignitatem, secundum quam talis finis sit ei competens: et ad hoc datur gratia; ad inclinandum autem affectum in hunc finem datur caritas; ad exequendum autem opera quibus praedictus finis acquiritur, dantur aliae virtutes . . . Et quod haec comparatio sit recte accepta, patet per Dionysium in 2 cap. cael. Hier.; ubi dicit, quod non potest aliquis habere spiritualem operationem nisi prius esse spirituale accipiat; sicut nec operationem alicujus naturae, nisi prius habeat esse in natura illa. Cf. *In II Sent. dist. 26, a. 3, Sol. John of St. Thomas, Cursus Theologicus*, VI, disp. 22, a. 2, n. 5, p. 789. Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, IX, tr. 14 (De Gratia Dei) disp. 4, dub. 5, n. 79, p. 562.

man becomes partaker of the divinity; for thus its appetite will be able through charity to tend towards divine things, and through the other virtues to do those things which are [related] to God; hence, just as the natural *esse* precedes the inclination of the natural appetite [arising] from the natural powers, so grace precedes charity and the other virtues.⁴⁹

So far, we have seen St. Thomas' descriptive definition of virtue and how, because of that definition, it was necessary to maintain that a supernatural nature, which is grace, preceded the virtues, and specifically charity. Through the frequent use of analogy the Angelic Doctor argues that because grace precedes the virtues, it must be really distinct from them.

C. Grace Is Really Distinct From the Virtues

In elaborating this argument the Angelic Doctor appeals to several different analogies. The first is the analogy existing between the light of reason and the light of grace. It is found in his *Summa Theologica*. To better appreciate the following question, one must keep in mind that in an earlier section from this same article St. Thomas had explicitly stated that, considering the very nature of a virtue, grace must be really distinct from virtue since it preceded virtue.

It is evident that virtues acquired through human acts are dispositions by which man is suitably disposed in order to that nature by which he is a man. However, the infused virtues dispose a man in a higher manner and to a higher end; hence, it is necessary that they [dispose him] in order to some higher nature, that is, in order to nature which is divine by participation,

⁴⁹ In 2 ad Anibaldum, dist. 26, q. 1, a. 2, corp: Cum charitas quamdam inclinationem appetitus in bonum supernaturale importet, quae quidem inclinatio non proportionatur ad esse naturae; oportet, quod aliquod spirituale esse praeintelligatur in anima ante charitatem, per quod homo fit divinitatis particeps: sic enim appetitus ejus poterit per charitatem tendere in divina, et per alias virtutes ea quae Dei sunt, operari; unde sicut esse naturale praecedit inclinationem naturalis appetitus ex viribus naturalibus: ita gratia charitatem et alias virtutes.

which is called the *light of grace*, according to what II Peter 1, 4 says: *Maxima et pretiosa vobis* (Vulgate, *nobis*) *promissa donavit, ut efficiamini divinae consortes naturae . . .* Therefore, just as the natural light of reason is something outside the acquired virtues which are said to be in order to that natural light, so also that very light of grace which is a participation of the divine nature is something outside the infused virtues, which are derived from that light, and are ordinated to that light; . . . Just as the acquired virtues perfect man for walking according as that is in harmony with the natural light of reason, so the infused virtues perfect man for walking in a manner which accords with the light of grace.⁵⁰

Secondly, St. Thomas appeals to the relationship existing between the natural *esse* and its inclination, and says the same relationship is to be found analogously in the relationship existing between the supernatural *esse*, which is grace, and its inclination; and specifically, charity.

And therefore just as in natural things nature itself is something different from its inclination and its motion or operation; so in supernatural things, grace is different from charity, and from the other virtues.⁵¹

⁵⁰ *I-II*, q. 110, a. 3, corp: *Manifestum est autem quod virtutes acquisitae per actus humanos, . . . sunt dispositiones, quibus homo convenienter disponitur in ordine ad naturam, qua homo est. Virtutes autem infusae disponunt hominem altiori modo, et ad altiorem finem: unde etiam oportet quod in ordine ad altiorem naturam, hoc est, in ordine ad naturam divinam participatam, quae dicitur lumen gratiae, secundum quod dicitur 2 Petr. 1, 4: Maxima et pretiosa vobis promissa donavit, ut per haec efficiamini divinae consortes naturae . . . Sicut igitur lumen naturale rationis est aliquid praeter virtutes acquisitas, quae dicuntur in ordine ad ipsum lumen naturale; ita etiam ipsum lumen gratiae, quod est participatio divinae naturae, est aliquid praeter virtutes infusas, quae a lumine illo derivantur, et ad illud lumen ordinantur; . . . Sicut enim virtutes acquisitae perficiunt hominem ad ambulandum, secundum quod congruit lumini naturali rationis; ita virtutes infusae perficiunt hominem ad ambulandum, secundum quod congruit lumini gratiae.*

⁵¹ *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 2, corp. in fine: *Et ideo sicut in rebus naturilibus est aliud natura ipsa quam inclinatio naturae, et ejus motus vel operatio; ita et in gratuitis est aliud gratia a caritate, et a ceteris virtutibus.*

Finally, St. Thomas appeals to the analogy of origin which he sees in the manner in which the natural and supernatural virtues or powers take their rise from their proper *esse*.

And therefore some say that grace is essentially different from virtue. For it is necessary that perfections be proportionate to perfectibles: hence, just as there flow from the essence of the soul faculties really distinct from itself, like an accident in a subject, but nevertheless are all united in the essence of the soul as in a source; so also, from grace there is some perfection of the essence, as has been said, and from it [grace] there flow virtues which are perfections of the faculties, essentially different from grace, but conjoined nevertheless in grace as in their source after the manner in which different rays proceed from the same body which gives out light.⁵²

In this passage the Angelic Doctor argues from the nature of the relationship which exist between the faculties and nature, to the relationship which should exist between the supernatural faculties and the supernatural nature which is grace. In the natural order, the perfections he speaks of are the faculties; the perfectible is the nature. These perfections flow from the nature, perfect it, and are proportionate to it, but distinct from it as accidents are from the subject in which they inhere. In the supernatural order the perfections are the supernatural virtues; the perfectible is grace, from which the virtues flow, and in which they are all conjoined as in their source of origin. Hence, just as the natural virtues are distinct from their source, so too the supernatural virtues ought to be really distinct from their supernatural source which is grace.

⁵² *In II Sent.* dist. 26, q. 1, a. 4, Sol. in fine: Et ideo alii dicunt, quod gratia essentialiter a virtute differt. Oportet enim perfectiones perfectibilis proportionatas esse; unde sicut ab essentia animae fluunt potentiae ab ipsa essentialiter differentes, sicut accidentis a subjecto, et tamen omnes uniuntur in essentia animae ut in radice; ita etiam a gratia est perfectio essentiae, ut dictum est, et ab ea fluunt virtutes quae sunt perfectiones potentiarum, ab ipsa gratia essentialiter differentes, in gratia tamen conjunctae sicut in sua origine, per modum quo diversi radii ab eodem corpore luente procedunt.

Another, and the final argument we select from the writings of Thomas, is taken from his earliest work.

Besides, that in which things diverse in species agree and that in which these same things are distinguished, cannot be the same thing essentially. But all the virtues are alike in that which makes works meritorious; they are distinct in this that they elicit determined acts. Therefore that which is the principle of meriting is something essentially different from that which is the principle of the distinction of acts. But the principle of meriting is grace, as is said in Scripture; however, the principle of distinction in act is the determined species of the virtue; for as the virtue is, so does it make the habit.⁵⁸

St. Thomas employs here a simple argument. The virtues are all alike in this that they can perform meritorious acts. They are really distinct in this that they perform specifically distinct acts. Therefore that which makes their acts meritorious and that which makes them specifically distinct from one another cannot be really the same thing. But it is grace which makes them meritorious. Therefore grace cannot be the same thing as that which makes their acts specifically distinct from one another. But what makes their acts specifically distinct is the determined species of virtue, or in other words, the fact that it is *haec virtus*, specified by its proper object and end, faith, hope, or charity, which is acting. Therefore grace cannot be the same thing essentially as some special virtue.

And the Angelic Doctor concludes, since charity is a special

⁵⁸ *Op. cit., loc. cit., corp. ante Sol: Praeterea, illud in quo conveniunt diversa in specie, et illud in quo eadem distinguuntur, non possunt esse idem per essentiam. Sed omnes virtutes conveniunt in hoc quod est opera meritoria reddere; distinguuntur autem in hoc quod determinatos actus educunt. Ergo illud quod est principium merendi, est aliud per essentiam ab eo quod est principium distinctionis actuum. Sed principium merendi est gratia, ut in littera dicitur; principium autem distinctionis in actu, est determinata species virtutis; quia qualis est virtus, tales habitus reddit. Ergo gratia et virtus per essentiam differunt.*

virtue⁵⁴, then charity must be really distinct from grace, its nature.

For confirmation of his position St. Thomas appeals more or less in passing to the testimony of Sacred Scripture, invoking the text given in Romans 5, 5: . . . *the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.* From this text the Angelic Doctor deduces the following argument:

Therefore, the giving of the Holy Spirit precedes charity as cause does effect. But the Holy Spirit is given according to some [one] of his gifts. Therefore, some other gift is in us which precedes charity; and this does not seem to be anything else but grace. Therefore grace is something distinct from charity.⁵⁵

Apropos this text John of St. Thomas points out that if one understands by *Spiritum* the Holy Spirit and not grace, the argument is not convincing.⁵⁶

D. The Subjects of Grace and Charity

In the opinion of the Angelic Doctor, since grace is really distinct from the virtue of charity, it follows immediately that grace resides in the essence of the soul, whereas charity resides in the will. First of all, St. Thomas gives what he deemed the common teaching concerning the subjects of grace and charity, and then explicitly states that grace resides in the essence of the soul.

By all it is commonly said that grace looks to the essence of the soul, whereas a virtue [looks to the] faculty; . . . Some accept this [view] in the proper

⁵⁴ Cf. *II-II*, q. 23, a. 4. In *III Sent.* dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, quaest. 2, 3. *De Virtutibus in Communi*, q. 2, a. 2, corp. ad 5.

⁵⁵ *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 2, Sed contra, 2: Ergo ratio Spiritus sancti praecedit caritatem sicut causa effectum. Sed Spiritus sanctus datur secundum aliquod donum suum. Ergo aliquod donum est in nobis quod praecedit caritatem; et hoc non videtur esse aliud quam gratia. Ergo gratia est aliud quam caritas.

⁵⁶ John of St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, disp. 22, a. 2, n. 4, p. 797.

sense, saying that the proper and first subject of grace is the essence of the soul, [the proper and first subject] of the virtue is the faculty: and this seems more reasonable.⁵⁷

St. Thomas now elucidates the reason why he holds that grace must reside in the essence of the soul and not in a faculty.

This question depends on the solution of the previous one [whether grace and virtue are really distinct]

. . . If, however, grace differs from virtue, the potency of the soul cannot be called the subject of grace, for every perfection of the faculty of the soul has the *ratio* of virtue, as has been said. (Cf. Pars. I, q. 55 and 56.) Hence, it remains that grace, just as it is prior to the virtue, should have a subject which is prior to the faculties of the soul, so that it should be in the essence of the soul.⁵⁸

Now the converse of this teaching is also true. Just as grace cannot reside in the faculties because grace is not a virtue, so charity must reside in the faculties precisely because it is a virtue, for, as the Angelic Doctor says, every virtue is by nature a perfection of a potency.⁵⁹ But St. Thomas is even more explicit and expressly states that charity resides in the will.

⁵⁷ In II Sent. dist. 26, q. 1, a. 3, Sol: . . . ab omnibus communiter dicitur quod gratia respicit essentiam animae, virtus autem potentiam; . . .

Quidam vero accipiunt proprie dictum, dicentes quod proprium et primum subjectum gratiae est essentia animae, virtutis autem potentia; et hoc rationabilius est . . .

⁵⁸ I-II, q. 110, a. 4, corp: Ista quaestio ex praecedenti dependet . . .

Si autem gratia differt a virtute, non potest dici quod potentia animae sit gratiae subjectum, quia omnis perfectio potentiae animae habet rationem virtutis, ut supra dictum est, art. 1, quaest. 55 et 56. Unde relinquitur quod gratia, sicut est prius virtute, ita habeat subjectum prius potentii animae, ita scilicet quod sit in essentia animae. Cf. III Pars, q. 7, a. 2, corp: q. 62, a. 2, corp. *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 6, corp. in fine: Alia vero opinio, quam sustinemus, est, quod gratia et virtus non sint idem per essentiam; et secundum hoc necesse est dicere quod gratia sit in essentia animae sicut in subjecto, et non in potentii; . . .

⁵⁹ Op. cit., loc. cit.

Charity in so far as it is a virtue, is not in the concupiscent [appetite] but in the will.⁶⁰

Therefore when St. Thomas speaks of charity as the form of the virtues he understands by charity a virtue really distinct from grace, and a virtue whose subject is the will. Further, the effective form impressed upon the virtues and their elicited acts proceeds from the *imperium caritatis* as from the act of a virtue really distinct from grace.

E. Thomistic Answer to Objections

The principal objections against the Thomistic position as we find them in the Scotistic teaching are drawn from four sources: 1) Sacred Scripture; 2) St. Augustine; 3) Trent; 4) Reason.

1. Sacred Scripture

The first objection is based on the fact that Scripture seems to attribute the same effects to grace and to charity. Therefore, the Scotists say, grace and charity cannot be really distinct from one another.

The Salmanticenses point out that the word *charity* is used indiscriminately in the sacred text.⁶¹ Sometimes to it are attributed the effects proper to a nature, as to be reborn, to be the root of virtues, etc.; and sometimes it is spoken of as that quality which is a perfection of the will. The fact that the same

⁶⁰ *I Pars*, q. 59, a. 4, ad 3: *Charitas, secundum quod est virtus, non est in concupiscibili, sed in voluntate.* Cf. *Op. cit.*, q. 82, a. 5, ad 2. *I-II*, q. 56, a. 6, corp. in fine: q. 57, a. 1, corp. in fine.

⁶¹ Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, IX, tr. 14 (De Gratia) disp. 4, dub. 5, n. 73, p. 559: *Ubi obiter animadverte charitatis vocabulum commune esse et gratiae sanctificanti, qua efficimur diligibiles Deo, et virtuti superadditae voluntati, qua dilectores Dei constituimur; . . . Nam poterit quis vocabulum *charitas* diversimode interpretari, pro diversis qualitatibus, ut sua magis refert; nisi oppositum constet ex contextu, quod haud facile contingat.* Cf. Zorell, Francis, *Lexicon Graecum Novi Testamenti* under *χάρις* cols. 1436-1439.

term is used to denote the effects proper to a nature, and the quality which perfects the will, argues not so much to the identity of grace and charity, as to the loose usage of the term. The exact meaning of any particular text—whether the reference is to the virtue of charity, or to grace as distinct from charity—must be determined from the context. And this, the Salmanticenses point out, can hardly ever be done so definitively that another interpretation is necessarily excluded. The argument from Scripture is therefore not conclusive for either position; rather the opinion one holds in this matter of the relation existing between charity and grace is likely to color his interpretation of the text and context of Sacred Scripture.⁶²

Further, Cajetan points out that when Sacred Scripture assigns the same effects to grace and to charity, it does so not because they are identical, but rather because of concomitance. Nor are these effects predicated of charity and grace in the same manner. For they are attributed to grace as to their first source, and to charity as to the fruit of grace, the proximate operative principle.

. . . although many excellences are common to grace and to charity because of their connection, they are not, however, related to both in the same way; for [they are related] to grace as to the first source, and to charity as to its fruit . . . Grace makes one a son of God formally, charity, operatively. The former is the principle of being in a nature divine by participation; the latter is the principle of operation.⁶³

Followers of St. Thomas also offer the following texts from Sacred Scripture in confirmation of their view. They freely admit they do not apodictically prove their position, none-the-less

⁶² *Op. cit.*, *loc. cit.* Cf. *Ibid*, n. 87, p. 566.

⁶³ Cajetan, *Op. cit.*, In I-II, q. 110, a. 3: *Licet multae excellentiae sint communes gratiae et caritati propter earum connexionem, non tamen eis conveniunt eodem modo; quia gratiae ut primae radici; et caritati ut fructui illius . . . Gratia facit filium Dei formaliter, caritas autem operatively. Illa enim est principium essendi in natura divina participata, ista est principium operandi secundum naturam divinam participatam.* Cf. John of St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, VI, dist. 22, a. 2, n. 10, p. 800. Collegii Salmanticensis, *Op. cit.*, IX, tr. 14, disp. 4, dub. 5, n. 87, p. 566.

they maintain their opinion is more in accord with the texts quoted. We give the passages most frequently appealed to.

1. The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.⁶⁴
2. Indeed the grace of our Lord has abounded beyond measure in the faith and love that is in Christ Jesus.⁶⁵
3. Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who have a love unfailing for our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.⁶⁶

Ferland⁶⁷, Van Noort⁶⁸, Hervé⁶⁹, Zubizaretta⁷⁰ and Lercher⁷¹ point out that in these texts the inspired author speaks of the various supernatural habits separately, and designates them by diverse names. Among the enumerations we find charity listed separately from grace, and designated by the term ἀγάπη, while grace is termed χάρις. Why, they ask, would the inspired author have used different terms if he had meant to indicate that charity and grace were identical?

2. St. Augustine

As we have seen, the Scotists appeal to certain texts in St.

⁶⁴ II Cor. 13, 13: 'Η χάρις τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ Ἅγιου Πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ἡμῶν.

⁶⁵ I Tim. 1, 14: ὑπερεπλεόνασεν δὲ ἡ χάρις τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν μετὰ πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

⁶⁶ Eph. 6, 23-24: Εἰρήνη τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς καὶ ἀγάπη μετὰ πίστεως ἀπὸ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. 'Η χάρις μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγαπώντων τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ.

⁶⁷ Ferland, August, *De Gratia*, p. 170.

⁶⁸ Van Noort, G., *De Gratia Christi*, n. 142, p. 140.

⁶⁹ Hervé, J. M., *Manulae Theologiae Dogmaticae*, III, n. 22, pp. 31, 32.

⁷⁰ Zubizaretta, V., *Theologia Dogmatico-Scholastica*, III, n. 192ff. pp. 128, 129.

⁷¹ Lercher, L., *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae*, IV/1, n. 77, p. 77.

Augustine and claim that he identified grace and charity.⁷²

The Salmanticenses answer that such an interpretation of St. Augustine is not a necessary one, for being thoroughly imbued with the phraseology of Scripture St. Augustine could be using the word *charity* to signify *sanctifying grace*.⁷³

More particularly, St. Thomas answers one of the arguments based on the following text of Augustine: *sola caritas est quae dividit inter filios regni et filios perditionis: cetera enim dona sunt bonis malisque communia.*⁷⁴

That charity alone distinguishes between the sons of the kingdom and the sons of perdition, belongs to it [charity] in so far as it cannot be uninformed, as the other virtues; hence, this does not exclude grace by which charity itself is informed.⁷⁵

In his turn, the Angelic Doctor appeals to Augustine to confirm his view that charity and grace are really distinct.

Nothing precedes itself. But grace precedes charity, as Augustine says in *2 de praedestinatione Sanctorum (in lib. de dono Perseverantiae, cap. 16, circa fin.)*. Therefore grace is not the same thing as charity.⁷⁶

⁷²Cf. our text, page 70.

⁷³Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, IX, tr. 14, disp. 4, dub. 5, n. 87, p. 567.

⁷⁴*De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 2, obj. 6.

⁷⁵*Op. cit.*, loc. cit., ad 6: *Hoc quod caritas sola distinguit inter filios perditionis et regni, convenit ei in quantum non potest esse informis, sicut aliae virtutes: unde per hoc non excluditur gratia, qua ipsa caritas formatur.* Cf. also, Cajetan, *op. cit.*, in I-II, q. 110, a. 3, ad 1: *Falsum quoque est quod dividere inter filios regni et perditionis aequa formaliter conveniat utriusque: nam gratia facit filium Dei formaliter, caritas autem operative.* Illa enim est principium essendi in natura divina participata: ista est principium operandi secundum naturam divinam participatum. Et similiter diversimode utraque est forma virtutum, et coniugit fini ultimo: quia caritas ut proximum operandi principium, illa ut primum.

⁷⁶*Op. cit.*, loc. cit., Sed contra, 1: *Nihil praevenit se ipsum. Sed gratia praevenit caritatem, ut Augustinus dicit in 2 de praedestinatione Sanctorum (in lib. de dono Perseverantiae, cap. 16, circa fin.). Ergo gratia non est idem quod caritas.*

3. The Council of Trent

The Thomists concede that the arguments from the Council of Trent demonstrate the concomitance of grace and charity, but they deny that their identity can be proven from the Church's teaching.

Thus Sylvius answers one of the favorite arguments of the Scotists in this wise.

It makes no difference that the Council says there is one formal cause of justification. Even though grace and charity are placed as two really distinct habits, they are not thereby placed as being each separately the adequate formal cause of justification: for the one cause is the justice of Christ by which He makes us just; this, however, embraces grace and the gifts or the virtues, as is signified in those words: *Per voluntariam susceptionem gratiae et donorum*: and also by these: *In ipsa justificatione cum remissione peccatorum haec omnia simul infusa accepit homo, etc., Fidem, Spem et Charitatem*: so that all those concur under the nature of one complete form of justification: grace indeed by dignifying and rectifying the soul, but the virtues by ordinating the faculties to actions and towards the end.⁷⁷

In this text Sylvius is pointing out that the justice of Christ, the principal instrumental cause of our justification, is one. However, the formal cause of our justification is physically manifold, and includes the virtues and grace, which together constitute the

⁷⁷ Sylvius, F., *op. cit.*, in I-II, q. 110, a. 3, ad 4, p. 568: Non refert quod Conc. dicat unicam esse formalem causam justificationis. Quamvis enim gratia et charitas ponantur esse duo habitus realiter distincti: non propterea ponuntur duo, quae singulariter sint adequatae causae formalis justificationis cum illa una causa sit justitia Christi, qua nos justos facit; haec autem complectatur gratiam et dona seu virtutes, ut verbis illis significatur: *Per voluntariam susceptionem gratiae et donorum*: itemque istis; *In ipsa justificatione cum remissione peccatorum haec omnia simul infusa accepit homo etc., Fidem, Spem, et Charitatem*: ita ut ista omnia concurrent in ratione unius completae formae justificationis: gratia quidem, ut animam dignificando et rectificando et virtutes autem, ut ordinando potentias in operationes et finem.

one formal cause of justification variously affecting the soul and its faculties. Hence the fact that there is one formal cause of justification does not render it impossible that the habits of grace and charity should be really distinct.

Apropos the argument drawn from canon eleven of the sixth session of Trent the same author has this comment.

It makes no difference that when the Council speaks of grace and charity in canon eleven it uses a verb of the singular number. Nor does it follow from this that the Council wishes [to say] that grace and charity are one and the same habit, but only that they are one under the nature of formal cause; it speaks of them [grace and charity] in so far as they constitute one complete form of justification.⁷⁸

However, the Thomists in their turn appeal to Trent and to other councils of the Church and to the Roman Catechism to show that their opinion is not only in conformity with the teaching of the Church, but even that their view is more readily conformable to that teaching. The many authors who treat this matter are in agreement concerning the more pertinent texts bearing on the point. We list them and the conclusions deduced from them.

- 1) *The Council of Vienna (1311-1312)* approved as more probable the opinion which held "*tam parvulis quam adultis conferri in baptismo informantem GRATIAM ET VIRTUTES*".⁷⁹
- 2) *The Council of Trent (1545-1563)* teaches that justification is effected "*per voluntariam susceptionem GRATIAE ET DONORUM*"⁸⁰ . . .

⁷⁸ *Ibid*: Non refert etiam quod quando conc. can. 11 de gratia et charitate loquitur utatur verbo singularis numeri. Non enim inde consequens est, ipsum velle, quod gratia et charitas sint unus idemque habitus: sed tantum quod sint unum ratione causae formalis: loquitur enim de illis, quatenus constituunt unam completam formam justificationis: ut bene explicat Choquetius de Natura Grat. sanctificant. disp. 51, cap. 3.

⁷⁹ DBU, 483.

⁸⁰ DBU, 799.

ideoque ipsam non haberi exclusa gratia et caritate".⁸¹

- 3) *The Roman Catechism* in commenting on this doctrine says: "*Huic autem gratiae additur nobilissimus omnium virtutum comitatus, quae in animam cum gratia divinitus infunduntur*".⁸²

To these texts, representative of those quoted by the majority of theologians favoring the distinction between grace and charity, Lercher adds the following from the provincial council of Maintz.

With the remission of sins man receives also the grace of God, and through the Holy Spirit [he receives] at the same time together with faith, charity . . . and hope.⁸³

In the opinion of the Thomists these texts from the various Councils and the Roman Catechism certainly demonstrate that the interpretation given by the Scotists to the Church's statements is not a necessary one. Indeed, while admitting that these same texts do not prove their position, they hold that these statements of the Church are more easily explained in the light of their opinion that charity and grace are really distinct.

For our part, we cannot see how the passages from the Council of Vienna or the Roman Catechism are particularly favorable to the Thomistic position. The Scotists might easily point out that when these councils or the catechism speak of *grace and the virtues*, there is no need to conclude that charity is included under the virtues as distinct from grace. The last passage quoted from Trent where we meet the phrase "*exclusa gratia et caritate*," and the text from the Council of Maintz are indeed more to the

⁸¹ DBU, 821.

⁸² *Catechismus Romanus*, p. 2, c. 2, n. 51.

⁸³ Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, 32, 1406: Cum venia peccatorum homo etiam Dei gratiam, et per Spiritum Sanctum una cum fide simul caritatem . . . , ac spem accipit. Hisque Dei donis in ipso permanentibus . . . Cf. Lercher, *op. cit.*, IV/1, n. 75, p. 75. Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, IX, tr. 14, n. 78, p. 561.

point. However, with Michel, we feel that a more objective appraisal of the history of the formation of the decrees of Trent moves one to conclude that this council did not intend to decide the theological questions and disputes concerning the relationship existing between grace, charity, and the gifts.⁸⁴

4. Reason

Since the sources of revelation are silent or indefinite, the principal force of the argument in this theological discussion must needs be from reason. It is important then that we offer in some detail the Thomistic reply to the Scotistic objections against their position.

A forceful argument against St. Thomas' teaching may be summarized thus. If the virtues presuppose grace, as in the natural order the operative faculties presuppose nature, then how can it be explained that when grace is lost faith and hope remain as true supernatural virtues?

This much, it appears, can be explained. Faith and hope depend on charity immediately, and on grace remotely that they may have the *perfectum esse virtutis*, that is, the perfection of virtue capable of eliciting meritorious acts. That charity is immediately responsible for the *perfectum esse virtutis* appears from this pertinent passage.

Indeed faith and hope can exist in some manner without charity; but without charity they do not have the *ratio* of perfect virtue. Since it is the work of faith to believe God (to believe, however, is to give assent to someone by one's own will), if he does not will it [the assent] in a due manner, it will not be a perfect work of faith; that he wish something in a due manner comes about through charity which perfects the will . . . So therefore there is faith without charity, but not a perfect virtue . . . And in a like manner we must

⁸⁴ Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire Des Conciles*, X (par A. Michel) p. 97: Dans cet enseignement officiel, il ne faut donc pas chercher une solution aux controverses théologiques sur l'essence ou le sujet de la grâce sanctifiante, sur les rapports avec la charité et les dons. Toutes ces controverses ont été laissées par le concile dans le *statu quo*.

speak of hope; for it is the act of hope to expect a future happiness from God: which act is perfect if it be done because of the merits which one possesses, which cannot be without charity; if, however, one expects this because of merits which he does not yet possess but proposes to acquire in the future, it will be an imperfect act: and this can exist without charity. Therefore, faith and hope can exist without charity, but *properly speaking*, they are not virtues.⁸⁵

We see then that the virtues of faith and hope depend immediately upon charity in order that they may be properly called virtues, in other words, that they may be able to elicit meritorious acts. And for this very reason faith and hope also require the presence of grace that they may be perfect virtues, for charity, their immediately perfective principle, itself needs grace that it may be well (meritoriously) ordained to the ultimate end. For its proper ordination to the ultimate end consists in this that it be able to elicit meritorious acts, and for this grace is required.

Charity would not suffice for meriting an eternal good unless the suitability of the one meriting be presupposed, which is [effected] through grace; otherwise our love would not be worthy of such a reward.⁸⁶

We may conclude therefore that faith and hope depend on charity

⁸⁵I-II, q. 65, a. 4, corp: Sic igitur fides et spes sine charitate possunt quidem aliqualiter esse; perfectae autem virtutis rationem sine charitate non habent. Cum enim fidei opus sit credere Deo, credere autem sit alicui propria voluntate assentire, si non debito modo velit, non erit fidei opus perfectum; quod autem debito modo velit, hoc est, per charitatem, quae perficit voluntatem . . . Sic igitur fides est quidem sine charitate, sed non perfecta virtus; . . . Et similiter dicendum est de spe: nam actus spei est expectare futuram beatitudinem a Deo: qui quidem actus perfectus est, si fiat ex meritis quae quis habet, quod non potest esse sine charitate; si autem hoc expectet ex meritis quae nondum habet, sed proponit in futurum acquirere, erit actus imperfectus: et hoc potest esse sine charitate. Et ideo fides et spes possunt esse sine charitate; sed sine charitate, proprie loquendo, virtutes non sunt.

⁸⁶De Veritate, q. 27, a. 2, ad 4: Charitas non sufficeret ad merendum bonum aeternum, nisi praesupposita idoneitate merentis, quae est per gratiam; aliter enim dilectio nostra non esset tanto praemio condigna.

immediately, and grace remotely in order that they may be perfect virtues capable of eliciting meritorious acts.

Now when charity and grace are lost, the habits of faith and hope do indeed remain as true theological virtues. That faith remains we know from the Council of Trent;⁸⁷ that hope remains is common theological teaching. However, St. Thomas insists that they remain as *true but imperfect virtues*, capable of a good act but not of a meritorious act, once charity and grace have been lost.

He who lacks charity can perform another act, not precisely because he lacks charity, but in so far as he has some other gift from God, faith or hope, or even some natural good which is not taken away in its entirety by sin . . . In this way there can be some good act of the species proper to itself (*ex suo genere*) without charity; but there cannot be a perfectly good act because there is lacking the due ordination to the ultimate end.⁸⁸

Therefore, for St. Thomas faith and hope do exist as virtues without charity and grace; indeed, according to their proper *ratio*, faith and hope precede charity.⁸⁹ But without charity and grace they exist only as imperfect virtues; in his own terminology, as applied to faith and hope, they exist as virtues *secundum inchoationem*,⁹⁰ the *virtus vera imperfecta* already discussed.⁹¹ The reason for this is that without charity and grace, faith and hope lack *due* ordination to the ultimate end; another way of

⁸⁷ DBU, 838.

⁸⁸ II-II, q. 23, a. 7, ad 1: *Alius autem potest esse actus charitate carentis, non secundum id quod charitate caret, sed secundum quod habet aliquod aliud donum Dei, vel fidem, vel spem, vel etiam naturale bonum; quod non totum per peccatum tollitur . . . Et secundum hoc sine charitate potest quidem esse aliquis actus bonus ex suo genere: non tamen perfecte bonus, quia deest debita ordinatio ad ultimum finem.*

⁸⁹ I-II, q. 65, a. 5, ad 2: . . . sed fides et spes secundum rationem propriam praesupponuntur ad charitatem. Cf. *Op. cit.*, q. 62, a. 4.

⁹⁰ *Op. cit.*, q. 65, a. 4, corp: *Fides et spes, sicut et virtutes morales, dupliciter considerari possunt: —uno modo secundum inchoationem quamdam; —alio modo secundum perfectum esse virtutis.*

⁹¹ Cf. our text, pages 1-5.

saying they cannot act meritoriously. Uninformed faith and hope are capable of good acts but not of perfect or meritorious acts, which charity and grace alone make possible.

Now, as is immediately evident from his definition of virtue as *quaedam dispositio perfecti; dico autem perfectum quod est dispositum secundum naturam*,⁹² when St. Thomas argues for the necessity of a supernatural *esse* distinct from virtue, he has in mind a habit which has the *ratio of perfectum esse virtutis*. Hence, to say that the imperfect habits of faith and hope remain after grace and charity have been lost—and logically this is the only way in which they can be said to remain—does not militate against the argument that grace and charity are required for the perfect habits of faith and hope, and hence must precede and so be distinct from the perfect habits of faith and hope.

Despite this reply to the difficulty, Bellarmine further insists that the imperfect habits of faith and hope, are nonetheless *supernatural* habits and elicit supernatural acts. How can it be explained that a supernatural habit can continue to exist and act, when its proper nature, grace, is lost?

Most authors⁹³ whom we have consulted, if they develop the matter at all, are content to give the explanation as we have drawn it from the teaching of St. Thomas. But this surely does not fully answer the difficulty proposed by Bellarmine, for to say that the habits of faith and hope remain uninformed does not explain how an imperfect supernatural habit can remain at all without its proper nature. A few theologians like Pesch⁹⁴ and Gonet⁹⁵ attempt explanations which do not, however, go directly to the point of the objection. John of St. Thomas⁹⁶, more

⁹² *I-II*, q. 110, a. 3, corp.

⁹³ Thus Lercher (*op. cit.*, IV/1, n. 143, p. 145), and Van Noort (*op. cit.*, n. 178, p. 172) merely state that the uninformed virtues of faith and hope do remain when grace is lost. Zubizaretta (*op. cit.*, III, n. 353, p. 218) is content to distinguish between the informed and uninformed virtues.

⁹⁴ Pesch, C., *Praelectiones Dogmaticae*, VIII, prop. 5, n. 86, p. 33.

⁹⁵ Gonet, *Clypeus Thomisticus*, V, disp. 8, a. 2, n. 27, p. 288.

⁹⁶ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus*, VI, disp. 22, a. 2, n. 9: *Vel secundo dicitur, quod fides et spes in peccatore non sunt connaturali modo, sed praeternaturali, per se enim exigunt esse cum gratia, et charitate, unde in Tridentino sessione vi, capite vii, dicuntur simul infundi*

accurately, admits that faith and hope, as they exist in the sinner, are not in their natural mode, but exist in some preternatural manner, for *per se* they demand co-existence with grace, but are left in the sinner to help excite and dispose him to turn again to God. Finally, and we feel this is the viewpoint that must be accepted, Mazzella⁹⁷ frankly admits that in this instance God dispenses from the natural connection existing between faith and charity, and more remotely, with grace.

Nor is this exception to the rigorous exigencies of the analogy upon which St. Thomas based his proof for the distinction between grace and the virtues something unique. If we based our judgment solely on reason, we should indeed conclude that with the loss of their supernatural nature which is grace, the supernatural habits of faith and hope ought likewise to be lost. But we know from Trent that they are not, as far as faith is concerned, and from the common teaching of theologians, in so far as hope is concerned. Now, in another instance, that of the Eucharist, do we not have a similar case? If we depended on reason alone, should we not expect that the accidents of bread and wine would be lost when the substances in which they normally adhere are changed into other substances, those of the Body and Blood of Our Lord? Yet once again from Trent⁹⁸ we know that the accidents of bread and wine do remain even when their proper substances are changed. An accepted view among theologians is that these accidents of bread and wine are immediately supported by God who normally supports them through their proper substances. So too, may it not be said that the supernatural habits of faith and hope, when their proper nature, grace, is lost, are immediately supported by God who normally supports them through their proper entitative habit?

There remains one final difficulty to be answered. Granted

cum ipsa justificationis gratia, relinquuntur tamen in peccatore ut possit excitari, et disponi ut convertatur ad Deum.

⁹⁷ Mazzella, C., *De Virtutibus Infusis*, Disp. 1, a. 10, n. 218, p. 111: Testimoniis vero quae asserere videntur naturalem fidei cum caritate connexionem, respondendum est Deum dispensare in ea connexione, uti liquet ex doctrina jam statuta.

⁹⁸ DBU, 884.

that the imperfect supernatural habits of faith and hope remain when grace and charity are lost, how can it be explained that these habits can elicit supernatural acts, particularly in view of St. Thomas' dictum: *operari sequitur esse?* The following reply is offered by Billot:

Indeed, infused habits are not given except for perfect acts . . . However, in the act of faith there is a twofold perfection to be considered. First, there is that perfection suited to it in *ratione assensus*, namely, in so far as it is considered as a simple consent (*secundum suam nudam essentiam*). The other [perfection] is that which is suited to it in *ratione actus virtuosi*, in so far as it is considered in its relation to the ultimate end, whence it receives the ultimate compliment of goodness. For the first perfection [simple consent] there is required no supernatural quality inhering in the will, for the very act of faith does not proceed elicitedly from the will; a transient elevation through an actual grace, which, nevertheless, in him who has uninformed faith, must be said to be due connaturally to the habit, suffices.⁹⁹

If we understand Billot correctly, he is basing his answer on the distinction given by St. Thomas between the habit which has the *perfectum esse virtutis*, because ordinated to the *finis ultimus simpliciter sub ratione finis*, and hence in a meritorious manner, and the habit which is a virtue only *secundum inchoationem (virtue vera imperfecta)*, because while retaining the inclination to the *finis ultimus simpliciter*, it is not ordinated to it

⁹⁹ Billot, L., *De Vertutibus Infusis*, th. 20, p. 333: *Re enim vera, infusi habitus non dantur nisi ad actus perfectos in quantum huiusmodi. Est autem duplex perfectio in actu fidei attendenda. Prima est quae ei competit in ratione assensus, prout scilicet consideratur secundum suam nudam essentiam. Alia est quae ei competit in ratione actus virtuosi, prout consideratur secundum esse relatum ad ultimum finem, unde accipit ultimum bonitatis complementum. Ad priorem ergo perfectionem non requiritur supernaturalis qualitas inhaerens voluntati, cum a voluntate ipse fidei actus elicitive non procedat, sed sufficit elevatio transiens per actualem gratiam, tamen in eo qui fidem informem habet, ipsi habitui connaturaliter deberi dicenda est.*

sub ratione finis, and hence is not referred to it in a meritorious manner. The uninformed habit retains its inclination to the end because though uninformed it remains essentially the same habit as the informed habit;¹⁰⁰ it lacks the *perfectum esse virtutis*, which, as we have seen, is given by charity as the intrinsic, substantial, effective form of the virtues in that it refers the virtues and their acts to the end *sub ratione finis*. Now the act of uninformed faith is the act of a virtue *secundum inchoationem* (*virtus vera imperfecta*); it is a simple assent, not a meritorious assent, and as such, does not require that grace perfect the will through charity. However, such an act of uninformed faith is still a supernatural act, and does actually attain the supernatural *finis ultimus* though not *sub ratione finis*. And though the supernatural act of uninformed faith proceeds elictively from the habit of uninformed faith, precisely because it is an act of faith, it must needs be commanded by the will. Therefore, this supernatural act, attaining the supernatural end, even though not *sub ratione finis*, ought to be commanded by a supernatural principle. Since, in the question under discussion, neither grace nor charity are present, the will cannot be elevated by grace through charity, nor need it be, for the act of uninformed faith does not attain the end *sub ratione finis*. All that is required is that in some way the will be supernaturalized in moving the act of uninformed faith. We suggest that God who normally elevates the will through an impressed form, the habit of charity, in this instance elevates the will *per modum transeuntem* through an actual grace. And in this manner is it possible that the imperfect habits of faith and hope can elicit supernatural acts even though grace and charity are not present.

As regards the principle of St. Thomas, *operari sequitur esse*, we offer this observation. This principle is to be taken as a *moral universal*. It is absolutely true of those things which are in the merely natural order; it is not verified in every instance in the supernatural order. Nor is this repugnant. Firstly, it cannot

¹⁰⁰ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 7, corp: Unde fides formata et informis non distinguuntur sicut duo diversi habitus; sed sicut habitus perfectus et imperfectus. Unde, cum idem habitus qui prius fuit imperfectus, possit fieri perfectus; ipse habitus fidei informis fit formatus.

be said that because God acts in a certain way in the natural order, he must necessarily act in exactly the same manner in the supernatural order. Secondly, because in the Thomistic system at least, the natural faculties and the natural *esse* are really distinct entities, there is no repugnance in the fact that the faculty is elevated to the supernatural order, and the nature is not.

We admit therefore that the conservation of the imperfect supernatural habits of faith and hope and their eliciting supernatural acts is an exception to the way things are normally done in the natural order. However, we maintain that such an exception is not without precedent in the supernatural order, is perfectly compatible with the whole body of Thomistic teaching, and is in no way repugnant.

* * * * *

We have completed the first phase of our discussion concerning the relationship which exists between charity and grace as form. We find that according to Scotus and his followers charity, an operative habit only rationally distinct from grace, is the form of the virtues. According to St. Thomas, charity an operative habit really distinct from grace an entitative habit, is the form of the virtues. Our study of this point indicates that few arguments of value have been added to those alleged by Thomas and Scotus. Like Thomas then, we admit that the Scotistic opinion enjoys some probability, but we think that the Thomistic opinion is intrinsically much more probable. And during the last seventy-five years so many theologians have espoused the opinion advocated by St. Thomas, we do not hesitate to say that in our own time the opinion which holds that charity and grace are really distinct, and hence that charity is the form of the virtues as an operative habit really distinct from grace an entitative habit, is almost common theological teaching.

ARTICLE IV

THE INTER-RELATION OF GRACE AND CHARITY AS FORM

If we would understand the relationship existing between grace and charity as the form of the virtues, we must understand

the proper effect of each in referring the virtues to the supernatural end. The teaching of St. Thomas on this matter is based on analogy with the natural order.

A. The Relation of Grace to Charity Generically Considered

Grace is given to man in order that his very nature may be elevated and dignified, so that his perfected nature becomes proportionate to the supernatural end towards which he is moved by God.¹⁰¹ This quality,¹⁰² grace, which in a certain manner comes under the species of habit,¹⁰³ is the accidental form of the natural *esse*¹⁰⁴ and it habitually refers man to the ultimate end even though he be not actually moved by God, nor actually moves himself to the supernatural end.¹⁰⁵

Besides grace, which is analogously the *nature* in the super-

¹⁰¹ *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 2, corp: . . . sed per quod ipsa natura hominis elevetur ad dignitatem, secundum quam talis finis sit ei competens: et ad hoc datur gratia . . . Cf. *In III Sent.* dist. 27, a. 3, Sol.

¹⁰² *I-II*, q. 110, a. 2, corp: . . . et sic donum gratiae qualitas quaedam est.

¹⁰³ *In II Sent.* dist. 26, q. 1, a. 4, ad 1: *Gratia ad genus qualitatis reducitur, et ad primam speciem qualitatis; nec proprie tamen naturam habitus habet, cum non immediate ad actum ordinet; sed est velut habitudo quaedam, sicut sanitas se habet ad corpus.* Cf. *I-II*, q. 110, a. 3, ad 3.

¹⁰⁴ *I-II*, q. 110, a. 2, ad 2: . . . Et quia gratia est supra naturam humanam, non potest esse quod sit substantia aut forma substantialis; sed est forma accidentalis ipsius animae.

¹⁰⁵ *Summa Contra Gentiles*, II, lib. 3, 150, p. 442: Oportet autem hanc gratiam aliquid in homine gratificato esse, quasi quandam formam et perfectionem ipsius. Quod enim in aliquem finem dirigitur, oportet quod habeat continuum ordinem in ipsum: nam movens continue mutat quousque mobile per motum finem sortiatur. Cum igitur auxilio divinae gratiae homo dirigatur in ultimum finem, ut ostensum est, oportet quod continue homo isto auxilio potiatur, quousque ad finem perveniat. Hoc autem non esset si praedictum auxilium participaret homo secundum aliquem motum aut passionem, et non secundum aliquam formam manentem, et quasi quiescentem in ipso; motus enim et passio talis non esset in homine nisi quando actu converteretur in finem; quod non continue ab homine agitur, ut praecipue patet in dormientibus. Est ergo gratia gratum faciens aliqua forma et perfectio in homine manens, etiam quando non operatur. Cf. *Ferrariensis, in loco*, II, 2, p. 443.

natural order, God also gives to man an *appetite* for the supernatural end which appetite is the habit of charity, by which the affection, that is the will, is inclined to the end.¹⁰⁶

Over and above grace and charity which respectively correspond to the natural *esse* and the will in the natural order, man is also given certain supernatural or infused virtues to perform the works which will attain the end.¹⁰⁷ The virtues given together with grace are the infused theological and moral virtues.¹⁰⁸

Now the Angelic Doctor points out that certain virtues flow from grace in the same manner as the faculties do from the natural *esse*.

And just as the faculties flow from the essence of the soul, so from grace certain perfections which are called virtues and gifts flow into the faculties of the soul by which they are perfected in order to their acts.¹⁰⁹

That St. Thomas is here speaking only of the infused moral and theological virtues is evident because they alone presuppose grace as their nature for they alone are proportionate to that nature.

It is precisely because grace elevates the natural *esse* making it susceptive of the infused virtues, and because all the infused virtues flow from it as from their nature in the supernatural order, that St. Thomas speaks of grace as the form of the (infused) virtues *per modum originis*.

The grace of God is said to be the form of the virtues in so far as it gives a spiritual *esse* to the soul, that it may be susceptive of the virtues . . .¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 2, corp: . . . ad inclinandum autem affectum in hunc finem datur caritas.

¹⁰⁷ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit.; . . . ad exequendum autem opera quibus praedictus finis acquiritur, dantur aliae virtutes.

¹⁰⁸ *De Virtutibus In Communi*, q. 1, a. 10, corp. in fine. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, II, lib. 3, cc. 151, 152, 153.

¹⁰⁹ *III Pars*, q. 62, a. 2, corp: . . . sicut ab essentia animae fluunt ejus potentiae, ita a gratia fluunt quaedam perfectiones ad potentias animae, quae dicuntur virtutes et dona, quibus potentiae perficiuntur in ordine ad suos actus. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, corp.

¹¹⁰ *De Caritate*, q. 1, a. 3, ad 19: Gratia Dei dicitur esse forma virtutum, inquantum dat esse spirituale animae, ut sit susceptiva virtutum . . .

. . . grace informs [the other virtues] *per modum originis*, because from grace itself the habits of virtues take their rise formally in some manner, and are diffused through the diverse faculties. However, that which takes its rise from another draws its form and species from it . . .¹¹¹

Carefully, however, Ferrariensis points out that grace is not the *formal cause* of the infused habits of virtue but their *improper effective cause* in this sense that among effects essentially related to each other of which one presupposes the other, the first effect (of God's referring man to the supernatural end), grace, is said to be the cause of the second effects (the infused habits of virtue).¹¹² Hence, we may speak of grace as the improper effective form of the very habits of infused virtues in that it is their source as the nature from which they take their rise.

However, just as in the natural order the nature *inclines* man to his natural end but does not *actually* refer his acts to the natural end immediately but through the command of the superior power which is the will, so in the supernatural order, grace *inclines* man to seek the supernatural end, but does not *actually* refer his acts to the supernatural end save through the command of the superior power which is the will perfected through charity. For the information by which the infused virtues are said to be *inclined* to the supernatural end, grace alone appears to be sufficient; the habit of charity is required only because of its necessary connection with grace. But for the information by which the habits of inferior virtue are made capable of eliciting perfect acts actually referred to the end *sub ratione finis*, the *imperium caritatis* is required, as we have seen.¹¹³ Therefore, grace, which habitually inclines the virtues to the ultimate end, refers the acts of the inferior virtues to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis* through the *imperium caritatis*. Hence grace informs

¹¹¹ *In II Sent.* dist. 26, q. 1, a. 4, ad 5: . . . *gratia informat per modum originis*, quia scilicet ex ipsa *gratia* quodammodo *formaliter oriuntur* *habitus virtutum*, per *diversas potentias diffusi*. Illud autem *quod ab alio, formam et speciem ab eo trahit . . .*

¹¹² *Ferrariensis, op. cit.*, *In III CG*, c. 151, p. 446.

¹¹³ Cf. our text, pages 49-51.

their acts which are actually referred to the end *sub ratione finis* not immediately but through the act of charity commanding. Further, charity actually refers the acts of the inferior powers to the end *sub ratione finis* through an impressed form which constitutes the virtues already informed by grace, as perfect virtues capable of eliciting meritorious acts;¹¹⁴ hence, grace informs the meritorious or perfect habit of virtue not immediately but through the impressed form resulting from the act of charity commanding from the intention of its own end.

As St. Thomas says:

Some have said that grace itself is the form of faith and of the other virtues, not, however, some other virtue save in so far as they make grace to be the same thing essentially as virtue. But this cannot be whether grace and virtue differ essentially, or only rationally; grace looks to the essence of the soul, but virtue to the faculty. And although the essence be the root of all the faculties, nevertheless all the faculties do not flow equally from the essence; since some faculties are naturally prior to others, and move others. Whence it is necessary that habits in inferior powers be informed by habits which are in the superior powers; and so the information of the inferior virtues ought to be from some superior virtue and not from grace immediately.¹¹⁵

Does St. Thomas mean to imply here that grace informs the habits of virtue mediately through the very habit of charity ante-

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, corp: Quidam enim dixerunt, quod ipsa gratia est forma fidei et aliarum virtutum, non autem aliqua alia virtus, nisi quatenus ponunt gratiam esse idem per essentiam cum virtute. Sed hoc esse non potest; sive enim gratia et virtus per essentiam differant, sive ratione tantum; gratia ad essentiam animae respicit, virtus autem ad potentiam. Quamvis autem essentia sit radix omnium potentiarum, tamen non ex aequo omnes potentiae ab essentia fluunt; cum quaedam potentiae sint naturaliter aliis priores, et alias moveant. Unde oportet quod etiam habitus in inferioribus viribus formentur per habitus qui sunt in superioribus; et sic ab aliqua virtute superiori debet esse inferiorum virtutum formatio, non a gratia immediate.

cedently to an act of charity commanding the virtues? A cursory inspection of the text just quoted might lead the reader to that conclusion. But it is not so. For as the Angelic Doctor continues this same article, he points out that grace informs the inferior habit through the command of the superior habit of virtue.

How faith is informed by charity must be understood in this way. Whenever there are two moving principles or agents ordered one to the other, what is effectively from the superior agent is, as it were, formal; what is from the inferior agent is, as it were, material . . .

Since therefore, faith is in the intellect according as it is moved and commanded by the will; what is *ex parte cognitionis*, is, as it were, material in it; but what is *ex parte voluntatis* must be taken as its information. And so, since charity is the perfection of the will, by charity is faith informed, and for the same reason are all the other virtues informed as they are considered by the theologian; namely, as they are principles of meritorious acts.¹¹⁶

Therefore, when St. Thomas says that grace informs the other virtues through the habit in the superior power, he does not say that grace informs the habits of inferior virtues immediately through the habit perfecting the superior power, which is charity, antecedently to an act of that power thus perfected, but only in so far as the inferior habit is commanded by the superior power

¹¹⁶ *Op. cit., loc. cit., in med:* Quomodo autem fides per caritatem formetur, sic intelligendum est. Quandocumque enim duo sunt principia moventia vel agentia ad invicem ordinata, id quod in effectu est ab agente superiori, est sicut formale; quod vero est ab inferiori agente, est sicut materiale.

Cum igitur fides sit in intellectu *secundum quod est motus et imperatus a voluntate*; id quod est *ex parte cognitionis*, est quasi materiale in ipsa; sed *ex parte voluntatis accipienda est ipsius formatio*. Et ideo, cum caritas sit perfectio voluntatis; a caritate fides informatur, et eadem ratione omnes aliae virtutes prout a theologo considerantur; prout scilicet sunt principia actus meritorii.

perfected by charity. As we have seen¹¹⁷ and repeat here, the *imperium* from the will perfected by charity, presupposes an act of the perfect will commanding the inferior powers, for the inferior powers are commanded from the intention of the end; and this supposes both knowledge of and intention of the end on the part of the superior power perfected by charity. Finally, the *imperium* of the superior power perfected by charity is carried out through an impressed form which is a participation in the very form of charity. As St. Thomas puts it:

Since . . . among the powers of the soul the will has the place of the first mover, its act is prior to the acts of the other powers, in so far as it commands them according to the *intention of the ultimate end, and uses them for attaining it.* Therefore, the powers moved by the will receive two things from it.

First, something of its form, according as every moving [power] and agent imprints its likeness in the things moved and patient of it. However, this form is either according to the form of the will itself, according as all the powers moved by the will participate in its liberty; or it [the form] is according to the habit perfecting the will which is charity; and so all the habits which are in powers moved by the will perfected by charity, participate in the form of charity.¹¹⁸

Hence, it seems that charity informs the inferior habits of virtue

¹¹⁷Cf. our text, page 40.

¹¹⁸In III Sent. dist. 23, q. 3, a. 1, Sol. 1: Cum ergo in viribus animae voluntas habeat locum primi motoris, actus ejus est prior quodammodo actibus aliarum virium, inquantum imperat eos secundum *intentionem finis ultimi et utitur eis in consecutione ejusdem.* Et ideo vires motae a voluntate duo ab ea recipiunt.

Primo formam aliquam ipsius secundum quod omne movens et agens imprimit suam similitudinem in motis et patientibus ab eo. Haec autem forma vel est secundum formam ipsius voluntatis, secundum quod omnes vires motae a voluntate libertatem ab ea participant; vel est secundum habitum perficiendum voluntatem qui est caritas; et sic omnes habitus qui sunt in viribus motis a voluntate caritate perfecta, participant formam caritatis.

through an impressed form which presupposed the knowledge and intention of its own end, and actually refers the acts of inferior virtues to the ultimate end *ex intentione finis sui*. When, therefore, St. Thomas says that grace informs the inferior habits of virtue through the superior power perfected by charity, he does not mean to say that grace does this *immediately* through the superior *habit* antecedently to the act of that habit commanding but only reductively, in this sense, that when that which is properly formal to one habit becomes formal in the act of another habit, then the first habit must be said to be, as it were, the form of the inferior habit.

. . . it must be realized that we must judge of habits according to acts; hence, when that which belongs to one habit becomes, as it were, formal in the act of another habit, it is necessary that one habit should be as the form to the other. However, in all voluntary acts that which is *ex parte finis* is formal; this is so because each act receives form and species according to the form of the agent.¹¹⁹

Only reductively therefore can grace be said to inform the habits of inferior virtues through the habit of charity; properly grace informs the habits of inferior virtues through the act of charity commanding the acts of the inferior virtues from the intention of its own end. The information spoken of here, since it is effected through an impressed form which is a participation in the very mode of charity, is that whereby the virtues are constituted principles of meritorious acts.

There appears to be this difference between the information given to the habits of infused virtues immediately from grace, and the information given to the habits of infused virtue meditately through the act of charity commanding. Through grace all the

¹¹⁹ *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, corp: . . . sciendum est, quod de habitibus oportet nos secundum actus judicare; unde quando id quod est unius habitus, est ut formale in actu alterius habitus, oportet quod unus habitus se habeat ad alium ut forma. In omnibus autem actibus voluntariis id quod est *ex parte finis*, est formale: quod ideo est, quia unusquisque actus formam et speciem recipit secundum formam agentis.

habits of infused virtues are implicitly ordered to the end of charity because they all look in some way to the supernatural good,¹²⁰ and all share in the implicit ordination to the supernatural end proper to the nature from which they take their rise. By the form imposed through the act of charity, commanding from the intention of its own end, the acts of the inferior virtues are explicitly referred to the end formally, that is, *sub ratione finis*.¹²¹ Because the reference to the end *sub ratione finis* is made through an impressed form which is a participation in the mode of charity, the form impressed by charity is said to incline the virtues themselves explicitly but in an habitual manner to the end *sub ratione finis*.

As a consequence, in contradistinction to grace which is the form of the virtues *per modum originis*, charity is said to be form of the virtues *ex parte actus*.

... Charity indeed is the form of the virtues *ex parte*

¹²⁰ *Op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

¹²¹ The terminology we are here employing in distinguishing between implicit and explicit reference to the end is based on the following quotation from the *De Veritate*, wherein St. Thomas speaks of an *implicit* ordination to the end which precedes an act which recognizes and wills the end; and the *explicit* ordination to the end, either actual or habitual, which is consequent upon the intention of the end. *Secunda causa non potest influere in suum effectum nisi in quantum recipit virtutem primae causae. Sicut autem influere causae efficientis est agere; ita influere causae finalis est appeti et desiderari. Et ideo, sicut secundarium agens non agit nisi per virtutem primi agentis existentem in eo; ita secundarius finis non appetitur nisi per virtutem finis principalis in eo existentem; prout scilicet est ordinatum in illud, vel habet similitudinem ejus. Et ideo, sicut Deus, propter hoc quod est primum efficiens, agit in omni agente; ita propter hoc quod est ultimus finis, appetitur in omni fine. Sed hoc est appetere ipsum Deum implicite; sic enim virtus primae causae est in secunda, ut principia in conclusionibus: resolvere autem conclusiones in principia, vel secundas causas in primas, est tantum virtutis rationalis. Unde sola rationalis natura potest secundarios fines in ipsum Deum per quamdam viam resolutionis inducere, ut sic ipsum Deum explicite appetat. Et sicut in demonstrativis scientiis non recte sumitur conclusio nisi per resolutionem in prima principia; ita appetitus creaturae rationalis non est rectus nisi per appetitum explicitum ipsius Dei, actu vel habitu. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 2, corp.*

actus; namely, in so far as it draws all the acts of the virtues to its own end, and the reason for this is that its object is the ultimate end. And so it happens that in all ordinated potencies and acts, that which looks to the higher end, bestows a form on the act which is inferior to it and whose act it ordinates to its own end . . . Hence, charity informs the other virtues, *sicut virtus virtutem*: but grace informs *per modum originis*, because from grace itself the habits of virtues take their rise formally in some manner, and are diffused through the diverse faculties.¹²²

The grace of God is said to be the form of the virtues in so far as it gives a spiritual *esse* to the soul that it may be susceptive of the virtues; but charity is the form of the virtues in so far as it informs their operations.¹²³

Because grace informs the virtues as their source, enabling them to perform acts which are proportionate to their supernatural end, and naturally ordered to the act of charity, grace is termed the first perfection of the virtues, but charity, because it refers their very acts to the ultimate end *sub ratione finis*, and constitutes the habits informed by grace as perfect habits of virtue capable of meritorious acts, is termed their proximate perfection.

Grace, however, is the first perfection of the virtues, but charity is as the proximate perfection.¹²⁴

¹²² *In II Sent.* dist. 26, a. 1, a. 4, ad 5: . . . Charitas enim est forma virtutum ex parte actus, inquantum scilicet omnes actus virtutum in suum finem convocat, eo quod ejus objectum est finis ultimus. Sic enim est in omnibus potentiis et actibus ordinatis, quod illa quae altiorem finem respicit, largitur formam arti quae sub ipsa est, cuius actus in suum finem ordinatur; . . . Unde charitas informat alias virtutes, *sicut virtus virtutem*; sed gratia informat per modum originis, quia scilicet ex ipsa gratia quodammodo formaliter oriuntur habitus virtutum, per diversas potentias diffusi.

¹²³ *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, ad 19: Gratia Dei dicitur esse forma virtutum, inquantum dat esse spirituale animae, ut sit susceptiva virtutum; sed charitas est forma virtutum inquantum format operationes earum.

¹²⁴ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 6: Gratia autem est sicut perfectio prima virtutum, sed caritas sicut perfectio proxima.

B. Grace and Charity as the Form of the Virtues in Specie

We know in general the relationship existing between grace and charity as the form of the habits of virtue. We must see how this relationship is carried out in the case of each virtue in particular. We shall discuss 1) the information of the theological virtues; 2) the information of the moral virtues; 3) the information of the intellectual virtues.

1. The Information of the Theological Virtues

St. Thomas tells us that the very habit of charity, like the other infused virtues, takes its rise from grace; grace, therefore, is the form of the very habit of charity.

That charity alone distinguishes between the children of perdition and of the kingdom, is suited to it in so far as it [charity] cannot be uninformed like the other virtues; hence grace, by which charity itself is informed, is not excluded on this account.¹²⁵

The habit of charity, being the superior habit of virtue,¹²⁶ informs the other habits of virtue through its *imperium*. And the result of this information by the *imperium caritatis* is that the inferior habits of virtue become proximately capable of acting rightly (meritoriously).

This is what constitutes the *ratio* of virtue, that it be proximately perfected towards acting rightly.¹²⁷

Therefore, since there is no habit of virtue superior to charity,

¹²⁵ *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 2, ad 6: Quod caritas sola distinguat inter filios perditionis et regni, convenit ei in quantum non potest esse informis, sicut aliae virtutes; unde per hoc non excluditur gratia, qua ipsa caritis formatur.

¹²⁶ *II-II*, q. 23, a. 6, corp. in fine: . . . et ideo charitas est excellentior fide et spe — et per consequens omnibus aliis virtutibus. Cf. *I-II*, q. 66, a. 6, corp. in princ. In *III Sent.* dist. 36, a. 4, Resp. n. 56.

¹²⁷ *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 6, corp. in fine: Istud autem est quod facit rationem virtutis, ut sit proxiime perfectiva ad recte agendum.

we may conclude that grace as the form *per modum originis* informs the habit of charity immediately, and then through the medium of the *imperium caritatis*, grace informs the other habits of virtue bestowing upon them the *perfectum esse virtutis*.

It is immediately evident that grace informs the virtue of hope, bestowing upon it the *perfectum esse virtutis*, through the medium of charity. Hope, like charity, resides in the will.¹²⁸ And no one can question that the habit of charity is superior to the habit of hope. Applying our principle that grace informs the inferior habits of virtue through the *imperium* from the superior habit of virtue, it follows that grace informs the habit of hope, bestowing upon it the *perfectum esse virtutis*, through the command of charity. As St. Thomas says, grace prepares the will through the medium of charity, whose form is grace.¹²⁹ Now the only other infused virtues residing in the will are the moral virtues to which hope itself is certainly superior by reason of its object, so that they cannot be the form of hope. Hence, the virtue of hope receives the *perfectum esse virtutis*, immediately through the command of charity, and remotely from grace which is itself the form of charity.

The *perfectum esse virtutis* bestowed upon faith by grace through the command of charity is not so easily accounted for. Faith, unlike hope, resides in the speculative intellect.¹³⁰ But the intellect is prior to the will, and in this sense, superior to the will. Therefore it would seem that faith should be the form of charity, since it perfects a faculty superior to that perfected by charity.

In the following manner does the Angelic Doctor answer this difficulty. Faith is indeed in the speculative intellect, but not absolutely; it is in the speculative intellect according as the intellect is subordinated to the command of the will.¹³¹ Hence,

¹²⁸ *II-II*, q. 18, a. 1, corp. in fine: *Et ideo spes est in appetitu superiori, qui dicitur voluntas, sicut in subjecto.* Cf. *De Spe*, q. 1, a. 2, corp. in fine. *I-II*, q. 40, a. 2, corp.

¹²⁹ *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 6, ad 7: *Gratia praeparat voluntatem mediante caritate, cuius gratia est forma.*

¹³⁰ *Op. cit.*, q. 14, a. 4, corp. in med: *Unde fides est in intellectu speculative, . . .*

¹³¹ *Ibid*: *Sciendum tamen, quod non est in intellectu speculative absolute, sed secundum quod subditur imperio voluntatis.*

while it may be admitted that the intellect is prior to the will *in via receptionis*, the will is nonetheless prior to the intellect in moving and acting, for every action or motion is from the intention of good. And for this reason the will, whose object is good *sub ratione boni*, is said to move all the inferior powers.¹⁸² Therefore, St. Thomas says:

Since . . . faith is in the intellect according as it is moved and commanded by the will; what is *ex parte cognitionis*, is, as it were, material in it; but what is *ex parte voluntatis* must be taken as its information. And so, since charity is the perfection of the will, by charity is faith informed, and for the same reason are all the other virtues, as they are considered by theologians informed; namely, as they are principles of a meritorious act.¹⁸³

Grace, therefore, informs the habit of faith, through the command of charity, for in moving or commanding the will, which charity perfects, is superior to the intellect which faith perfects.

Lest one object that this line of argument merely shows that St. Thomas taught the information of the act of faith through the act of charity commanding, we give his pointed reply to a similar objection.

When the superior power is perfect, from its perfection there is left some perfection in the inferior; and

¹⁸² *Op. cit.*, a. 5, ad 5: *Voluntas et intellectus diversimode se praecedunt ad invicem. Intellectus enim praecedit voluntatem in via receptionis; ad hoc enim quod aliquid voluntatem movet, oportet quod primum in intellectu recipiatur, . . . Sed in movendo sive agendo voluntas est prior: quia omnis actio vel motus est ex intentione boni; et inde est quod voluntas omnes vires inferiores movere dicitur, cuius objectum proprium est bonum sub ratione boni.*

¹⁸³ *Op. cit.*, q. 14, a. 5, corp. in fine: *Cum . . . fides sit in intellectu secundum quod est motus et imperatus a voluntate; id quod est ex parte cognitionis, est quasi materiale in ipsa; sed ex parte voluntatis accipienda est ipsius formatio. Et ideo, cum caritas sit perfectio voluntatis; a caritate fides informatur, et eadem ratione omnes aliae virtutes prout a theologo considerantur; prout scilicet sunt principia actus meritorii.*

so, since charity is in the will, its perfection in some manner redounds into the intellect, and so charity informs not only the act of faith, but *faith itself*.¹³⁴

What St. Thomas meant by the phrase "in some manner" the perfection of charity redounds into the intellect, has been discussed in a previous part of this work where we learned that from the very context of the article, the Angelic Doctor referred to the perfection bestowed through the *imperium caritatis* which presupposed an act of charity commanding the inferior virtues from the intention of its own end.¹³⁵

Since the infused habit of faith is the most perfect habit in the speculative intellect, it cannot be more immediately informed by some other habit superior to itself. Hence, grace must be said to bestow the *perfectum esse virtutis* upon the infused habit of faith immediately through the *imperium caritatis*.

2. The Information of the Moral Virtues

In discussing the inter-relation of grace and charity as the form of the moral virtues, we must distinguish between the infused moral virtues and the acquired moral virtues. This distinction is particularly important if we would understand the different manner in which grace is said to be the form of the infused moral virtues, and the acquired moral virtues.

a. The Information of the Infused Moral Virtues

So far as we can determine, St. Thomas, in discussing the moral virtues, carefully delineates the role of acquired prudence in relation to the other acquired moral virtues; he has little to say concerning the role of infused prudence in relation to the

¹³⁴ *Op. cit.*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 9: *Quando superior vis perfecta est, ex ejus perfectione relinquitur aliqua perfectio in inferiori; et sic, cum caritas est in voluntate, ejus perfectio aliquo modo redundat in intellectum: et sic caritas non solum actum fidei, sed ipsam fidem informat.*

¹³⁵ Cf. our text, pages 37-40.

other infused moral virtues. He seems to suppose that the same relationship exists in the higher order. For this reason, we must begin our investigation of the connection existing between acquired prudence and the other acquired moral virtues, and transfer our findings to the infused moral virtues.

There are four cardinal moral virtues, prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.¹³⁶ These virtues are called moral because they contain the rectitude of the will in some manner;¹³⁷ they are called cardinal because all the other moral virtues can be reduced to these four as to the more fundamental virtues in the same genus;¹³⁸ they are called acquired because they result from repeated good moral acts.¹³⁹

Of these virtues prudence resides in the practical intellect, justice in the will, fortitude in the irascible appetite, and temperance in the concupiscent appetite.¹⁴⁰ We have said that prudence is a moral virtue but that it resides in the practical intellect. St. Thomas explains how this can be.

Prudence, he admits, is essentially an intellectual virtue, but according to its matter it is nonetheless to be numbered among the moral virtues.

. . . prudence is the *recta ratio agibilium*. However, *agibia* are said to be moral works . . . therefore prudence is at one with the moral virtues as regards the matter of the virtues; and because of this it is numbered with them, although as to its essence, or its subject, it is intellectual.¹⁴¹

Further, the Angelic Doctor teaches that among the moral virtues

¹³⁶ *I-II*, q. 61, a. 2, corp. *De Virtutibus Cardinalibus*, q. 1, a. 1, corp.

¹³⁷ *Op. cit.*, q. 61, a. 1, corp. Cf. *op. cit.*, q. 56, a. 2, ad 3. *De Virt. Card.* q. 1, a. 1, corp.

¹³⁸ *I-II*, q. 61, a. 2, ad 3.

¹³⁹ *Op. cit.*, q. 65, a. 2, corp.

¹⁴⁰ *Op. cit.*, q. 61, a. 2, corp. *De Virt. Card.* q. 1, a. 1, corp. in fine.

¹⁴¹ *De Virt. Card.* q. 1, a. 1, ad 3: . . . prudentia est recta ratio agibilium. Agibia autem dicuntur moralia opera; . . . et ideo prudentia convenit cum moralibus virtutibus quantum ad sui materiam; et propter hoc connumeratur eis, licet quantum ad suam essentiam vel subjectum sit intellectualis. Cf. *I-II*, q. 57, a. 4, corp.

prudence is simply the superior virtue,¹⁴² and the moderatrix of the others.

Among the other virtues, however, prudence is the greatest virtue, for it is the moderatrix of the others.¹⁴³

The same thought is expressed in different fashion in the *Summa*. Prudence is there said to be in a subject which is rational *per essentiam*, whereas the other moral virtues are in subjects which are rational only *per participationem*.¹⁴⁴

Now the formal notion of virtue as we are considering it here is the good of the intellect.¹⁴⁵ And since prudence perfects the intellect in the very consideration of good,¹⁴⁶ in which good the other moral virtues share by participation, prudence must be the moderator of all the other moral virtues in that they receive something of the good of the intellect which eventually is to be found in their acts.

From these principles St. Thomas draws several conclusions, the first being that prudence is necessary for human life.

Living well consists in doing well. However, that one act well, there is required not only that he do something, but also that he do it in a certain manner, namely that he act according to a right choice, not only from impulse or passion. However, since election centers about those things which are *ad finem*, recti-

¹⁴² *I-II*, q. 61, a. 2, ad 1: *Prudentia est simpliciter principalior omnibus; sed aliae ponuntur principales, unaquaeque in suo genere.*

¹⁴³ *De Virt. Card.*, q. 1, a. 3, corp. in med: *Inter alias autem virtutes prudentia ext maxima, quia est moderatrix aliarum.*

¹⁴⁴ *I-II*, q. 61, a. 2, corp. in fine: . . . *Quadruplex enim invenitur subiectum hujus virtutis, de qua nunc loquimur: scilicet rationale per essentiam, quod prudentia perficit; et rationale per participationem, quod dividitur in tria, id est, in voluntatem, quae est subiectum justitiae, et in concupiscibilem, quae est subiectum temperantiae, et in irascibilem, quae est subiectum fortitudinis.*

¹⁴⁵ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit. in princ: *Principium enim formale virtutis, de qua nunc loquimur, est rationis bonum.*

¹⁴⁶ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit: *Quod quidem dupliciter potest considerari: uno modo secundum quod in ipsa consideratione rationis consistit; et sic erit una virtus principalis, quae dicitur prudentia.*

tude of choice requires two things; namely, a due end, and that which is suitably ordained to that due end. Man is suitably disposed to the due end by a virtue which perfects the appetitive part of the soul, whose end is *bonum* and *finis*. But for this that he be suitably ordained to the due end, it is necessary that man be rightly disposed through a habit of the intellect: for to counsel and to choose, which are concerned with those things which are *ad finem*, are acts of reason. Therefore, it is necessary that there be in the intellect some intellectual virtue through which the intellect is perfected for this that it be suitably disposed to those things which are *ad finem*: and this virtue is prudence. Hence prudence is a virtue necessary for living well.¹⁴⁷

Secondly, St. Thomas concludes that the moral virtues cannot exist as *perfect moral acquired virtues* without prudence, for without prudence which suitably disposes the intellect to those things which are *ad finem*, the other moral virtues could not act rightly with respect to those things which are *ad finem*, for they depend on the intellect that their choice of means to the end may be good.

Without prudence there cannot be any [perfect] moral virtue, for a moral virtue is an elective habit, that is, a [habit] making a good choice. That a choice be good, two things are required: first, that there be the due intention of the end; and this is done through the moral virtue which inclines the appetitive force to

¹⁴⁷ *Op. cit.*, q. 57, a. 5, corp: . . . Bene enim vivere consistit in bene operari. Ad hoc autem quod aliquis bene operetur, non solum requiritur quid faciat, sed etiam quomodo faciat, ut scilicet secundum electionem rectam operetur, non solum ex impetu aut passione. Cum autem electio sit eorum quae sunt ad finem, rectitudo electionis duo requirit, scilicet debitum finem, et id quod convenienter ordinatur ad debitum finem. Ad debitum autem finem homo convenienter disponitur per virtutem, quae perficit partem animae appetitivam, cuius objectum est bonum et finis. Ad id autem quod convenienter in finem debitum ordinatur, oportet quod homo directe (recte) disponatur per habitum rationis: quia consiliari et eligere, quae sunt eorum quae sunt ad finem, sunt actus rationis. Et ideo necesse est in ratione esse aliquam virtutem intellectualem, per quam perficiatur ratio ad hoc quod convenienter se habeat ad ea quae sunt ad finem: et haec virtus est prudentia. Unde prudentia est virtus necessaria ad bene vivendum.

good in accord with reason, which is the due end; secondly, that a man receive those things which are *ad finem*, and this cannot be save through the intellect counselling, judging, and commanding rightly; and this pertains to prudence and to the virtues annexed to it. Therefore without prudence, there cannot be a [perfect] moral virtue.¹⁴⁸

Hence, St. Thomas concludes that prudence is the proximate form of the perfect acquired moral virtues.

The intellect can be considered under a twofold aspect: under one aspect, in itself (*secundum se*); under another aspect, according as it directs (*regit*) the inferior virtues. In so far as it is directive of the inferior powers, it is perfected by prudence; hence it is that all the other moral virtues, by which the inferior powers are perfected, are informed by prudence as by their proximate form.¹⁴⁹

Having pointed out that a perfect acquired moral virtue cannot exist without prudence, the Angelic Doctor is equally insistent that prudence cannot exist without the moral virtues.

Some intellectual virtues can exist without a moral virtue, but prudence cannot exist without moral virtue.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ *Op. cit.*, q. 58, a. 4, corp: . . . Sine prudentia quidem esse non potest moralis, quia moralis virtus est habitus electivus, id est, faciens bonam electionem. Ad hoc autem quod electio sit bona, duo requiruntur: primo, ut sit debita intentio finis; et hoc fit per virtutem moralem, quae vim appetitivam inclinat ad bonum conveniens rationi, quod est finis debitus; secundo, ut homo recte accipiat ea quae sunt ad finem, et hoc non potest esse nisi per rationem recte consiliantem, judicantem et praecipientem; quod pertinet ad prudentiam et ad virtutes ei annexas, ut supra dictum est, quaest. 57, art. 4, 5 et 6. Unde virtus moralis sine prudentia esse non potest.

¹⁴⁹ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 11: Ratio potest dupliciter considerari: uno modo secundum quod regit vires inferiores. In quantum igitur est inferiorum virium regativa, perficitur per prudentiam; et inde est quod omnes aliae virtutes morales, quibus inferiores perficiuntur, formantur per prudentiam sicut per proximam formam.

¹⁵⁰ *I-II*, q. 58, a. 5, corp. in princ: Aliae virtutes intellectuales sine virtute morali esse possunt; —sed prudentia sine virtute morali esse non potest.

The reason for this is that prudence is concerned not only with general principles, but with particular principles and their relation to particular acts. Therefore man must be so disposed towards particular ends that to judge rightly concerning them becomes connatural to him. The habit which thus rightly disposes man to a particular end is a moral habit. Therefore prudence which is the *recta ratio agibilium in particulari* as well as *in universali*, cannot exist without such a moral habit engendering this disposition in man.¹⁵¹

Now the perfect acquired moral virtues thus informed by acquired prudence, St. Thomas calls virtues *secundum quid*, for they dispose a man well with respect to an ultimate end in *some* genus. However, only the *infused* virtues are *simply perfect*, and are to be called virtues *simpliciter*.¹⁵² But in order that one have a moral virtue which is *simply* perfect, and not merely perfect as a moral virtue, charity is required.

Prudence cannot exist without the moral virtues, in so far as the moral virtues dispose one to certain ends from which the ratio of prudence proceeds. But for the right *ratio* of virtue much more is it required that man be well disposed towards the *ultimate* end, which is effected through charity, as it is effected through the moral virtues concerning other ends; just as right reason in speculative matters absolutely demands the first indemonstrable principle that contradictories cannot be true at the same time. Whence it is evident that infused prudence cannot exist without charity, nor consequently can the other moral virtues which have no existence apart from prudence.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ *Op. cit., loc. cit.*

¹⁵² *Op. cit.*, q. 65, a. 2, corp. in med: Patet igitur ex dictis quod solae virtutes infusae sunt perfectae, et simpliciter dicendae virtutes, quia bene ordinant hominem ad finem ultimum simpliciter; aliae vero virtutes, scilicet acquisitae, sunt secundum quid virtutes, non autem simpliciter; ordinant enim hominem bene respectu finis ultimi in aliquo genere, non autem respectu finis ultimi simpliciter.

¹⁵³ *Op. cit., loc. cit.*: Prudentia autem non potest esse sine virtutibus moralibus, in quantum virtutes morales faciunt bene se habere ad quosdam fines, ex quibus procedit ratio prudentiae. Ad rectam autem rationem prudentiae multo magis requiritur quod homo bene se habeat circa ultimum

At this point, St. Thomas seems to assign all that he has said concerning the relationship existing between acquired prudence and the other acquired moral virtues to the relationship existing between infused prudence and the other infused moral virtues. This is particularly evident from the statement which reads: "*it is evident that infused prudence cannot exist without charity, nor consequently can the other moral virtues which have no existence apart from prudence.*"

With this in mind, we may conclude that just as acquired prudence is the proximate form of the other acquired moral virtues, so too infused prudence is the proximate form of the infused moral virtues. Now St. Thomas says that charity is necessary in order that the infused habit of prudence may exist. And just as the moral virtues are necessary for prudence to dispose man well with regard to some ultimate end in a *particular genus*, so charity is necessary to dispose man well in regard to the *finis ultimus simpliciter*. And for this reason the infused habit of prudence depends on the habit of charity that it may have the *recta ratio agibilium* with respect to those things that look to the ultimate end *simpliciter*. Therefore, the Angelic Doctor concludes, charity is the form of infused prudence, and consequently of all the other infused moral virtues which depend on prudence for their being.

But faith perfects the intellect considered in itself, in so far as it speculates concerning truth (*prout est speculativa veri*); hence it does not pertain to faith to inform the inferior virtues, but to be itself informed by charity, which informs the other virtues, even prudence itself, in so far as prudence, by reason of the end which is the object of charity, ratiocinates concerning those things which are *ad finem*.¹⁵⁴

finem, quod fit per charitatem, quam circa alios fines, quod fit per virtutes morales; sicut ratio recta in speculativis maxime indiget primo principio indemonstrabili, quod est contradictoria non simul esse vera. Unde manifestum fit quod nec prudentia infusa potest esse sine charitate, nec aliae virtutes morales consequenter, quae sine prudentia esse non possunt. Cf. In III Sent. dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3, ad 2.

¹⁵⁴ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 11: . . . Sed fides perficit rationem in se consideratam, *prout est speculativa veri*; unde ejus non est formare virtutes

The following conclusions are now in order. Acquired prudence is the proximate form of the acquired cardinal moral virtues. Infused prudence is the proximate form of the infused cardinal moral virtues. Charity is the proximate form of the infused habit of prudence, and hence, through prudence, of the other infused moral virtues. Grace must be termed the form of the infused habits of the cardinal moral virtues *per modum originis*, for the same reason that it was named the form of the theological virtues: —it is the proportionate nature which these infused moral virtues presuppose and from which they take their rise.

Therefore, as regards the information of the infused moral virtues we have the following interrelation between grace and charity. Grace is absolutely the remote form of the infused moral virtues as their source. Charity is the immediate form of the infused habit of prudence. Infused prudence is itself the form of the infused habits of justice, fortitude and temperance. Charity is said to inform these three infused moral virtues through the medium of the infused habit of prudence. Charity, therefore, is not the immediate form of *all* the moral virtues. It is truly immediate only in relation to the infused habit of prudence. In relation to the other infused moral virtues it is, properly, the form intermediate between grace and infused prudence.

Before concluding this section of our work, we should like to clarify a possible point of ambiguity. We have sometimes spoken of the habit of charity as the form of the virtues. It must be recalled here that St. Thomas taught that the very habit of charity is only the exemplary form and that improperly; namely, in so far as in some manner the other virtues acted after the manner of charity. Or he spoke of the habit of charity as the form, in so far as we judge of habits by their acts; in which sense, the habit of charity is said to be the form of the virtues reductively. These are not the meanings we ascribe to the phrase as we use it here. We employ the term in this part of our work

inferiores, sed formari a caritate, quae alias format, etiam ipsam prudentiam, inquantum ipsa prudentia propter finem, qui est caritatis objectum, circa ea quae sunt ad finem, ratiocinatur.

as we did when discussing charity as the effective form of the virtues. So that when we say that the habit of charity, or simply charity, is the form of the virtues, we must be understood to mean that the quiddity *ex caritate*, which is derived from an act of charity commanding the inferior virtues from the intention of its own end, is the form of the virtues and not in the sense that some intrinsic quiddity derives from the habit of charity, antecedently to the *imperium caritatis*.

b. The Information of the Acquired Moral Virtues

In treating of the infused habits of virtue, we have seen that the acquired habit of prudence is the proximate form of the acquired moral virtues, thereby constituting them as habits of virtue *secundum quid*.¹⁵⁵ But the form which these virtues receive from the habit of acquired prudence disposes the acquired habits of moral virtue to act well only with respect to an ultimate end in *some* genus which is not above the natural ability of man; it does not dispose the moral virtues well with respect to the *finis ultimus simpliciter*. How then do these virtues which are essentially imperfect, attain the *finis ultimus simpliciter* in a formal manner and thereby execute meritorious acts? For this, as we saw, the infused habit of charity is required.¹⁵⁶

Since the acts of the acquired moral virtues are sufficiently informed by acquired prudence in so far as they attain the ultimate end in some particular genus, charity is required only in so far as these acts of the acquired moral virtues attain the end proper to charity, which is the *finis ultimus simpliciter sub ratione finis*. In other words, charity can be the form of the acquired moral virtues in so far as the acts of these moral virtues are ordained to the ultimate end formally, and are thereby meritorious. It is precisely in this sense that St. Thomas speaks of charity as the form of the acquired moral virtues.

Now it is evident that the acts of all the other virtues are ordained to the end proper to charity whose

¹⁵⁵Cf. our text, page 118.

¹⁵⁶Cf. our text, page 118.

object is the *Summum Bonum*. In the case of the moral virtues this is evident, for these virtues center about some created goods which are ordained to the uncreated Good as to the ultimate end . . . Whence it becomes evident that in the acts of all the virtues that which is formal comes from charity; and for this reason is it said to be the form of the virtues, namely in so far as all the acts of all the virtues are ordained to the *Summum Bonum* which is loved.¹⁵⁷

Since through the ordination given by charity the acts of the moral virtues attain the *finis ultimus simpliciter* in a formal manner, these acts are meritorious. Indeed, without charity the acts of the acquired virtues could not be meritorious.¹⁵⁸ Therefore, St. Thomas says, the merit of these acts is to be attributed primarily to charity.

Merit, however, is attributed to charity, because the primary mover toward performing meritorious works is the will which charity perfects.¹⁵⁹

Hence, charity may be spoken of as the form of the acquired moral virtues in that it directs and refers their acts to the *finis ultimus simpliciter* formally thereby making them meritorious. The question now to be determined is this: is charity the immediate or the remote form of the acquired moral virtues in the sense just given? The teaching of the Angelic Doctor follows.

¹⁵⁷ *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, corp. in med: *Manifestum est autem quod actus omnium aliarum virtutum ordinatur ad finem proprium caritatis, quod est objectum ejus, scilicet summum bonum. Et de virtutibus quidem moralibus manifestum est: nam hujusmodi virtutes sunt circa quaedam bona creata quae ordinantur ad bonum increatum sicut ad ultimum finem . . . Unde manifestum est quod in actibus omnium virtutum est formale id quod est ex parte caritatis; et pro tanto dicitur forma omnium virtutum, inquantum scilicet omnes actus omnium virtutum ordinantur in summum bonum amatum.* Cf. *In II Sent. Dist. 26, q. 1, a. 4, ad 5; II-II, q. 23, a. 8, corp.*

¹⁵⁸ *De Virtutibus in Communi*, q. 1, a. 10, ad 4: . . . *actus virtutis acquisitae non potest esse meritorius sine caritate.*

¹⁵⁹ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 5: . . . *Meritum autem attribuitur caritati, quia primum movens ad operandum opera meritoria est voluntas, quam caritas perficit.* Cf. *I-II, q. 114, a. 4, corp.*

Just as the essence of the soul is the immediate principle of being, and is the principle of operation through the medium of the potencies, so the immediate effect of grace is to confer a spiritual *esse*, which pertains to the information of the subject . . . But the effect of grace through the medium of the virtues and gifts is to elicit meritorious acts.¹⁶⁰

In this passage we learn that grace acts immediately on the soul as upon its subject; it elicits meritorious acts not immediately of itself, but through the medium of the virtues and gifts. In this sense can grace be designated as the cause, and hence as the form, of the meritorious acts which proceed from the potencies. But though it is proper to the particular virtue to elicit a meritorious act, this cannot be done unless the particular virtue be commanded by charity.

And therefore the merit of eternal life pertains first of all to charity, and to the other virtues secondarily, according as their acts are commanded by charity.¹⁶¹

When therefore St. Thomas says that grace acts upon the potencies and elicits meritorious acts through the medium of the virtues and the gifts, he must mean that grace acts immediately through charity, and only secondarily through the other virtues in so far as they are commanded by charity. We may conclude then that charity *in relation to grace* is the immediate form of the acts of the acquired moral virtues in that it ordinates their acts to the *finis ultimus simpliciter* formally, thereby making them meritorious. Grace, which perfects the essence giving it a supernatural *esse*, and which charity always supposes, is the remote form of the meritorious acts of these same virtues. But is

¹⁶⁰ *Op. cit.*, q. 27, a. 5, ad 17: *Sicut essentia animae immediate est essendi principium, operationis vero principium est mediantibus potentiis, ita immediatus effectus gratiae est conferre esse spirituale, quod pertinet ad informationem subjecti . . . Sed effectus gratiae mediantibus virtutibus et donis est elicere actus meritorios.* Cf. *I-II*, q. 114, a. 4, corp.

¹⁶¹ *I-II*, q. 114, a. 4, corp. in fine: . . . *Et ideo meritum vitae aeternae primo pertinet ad charitatem, ad alias autem virtutes secundario, secundum quod earum actus a charitate imperantur.*

charity the simply immediate form of the acts of the acquired moral virtues, or does it inform these acts through a more proximate form which it immediately perfects?

We have seen that charity is the immediate form of the infused habit of prudence,¹⁶² and that the acquired habit of prudence is the immediate form of the other acquired moral virtues.¹⁶³ Now it would appear that the infused habit of prudence is the immediate form of the acquired habit of prudence in so far as the acquired habit of prudence is elevated to the *perfectum esse virtutis* through the command of charity. For it would seem that in acting under the command of charity, the infused virtue immediately directs its corresponding acquired virtue. This is at least intimated by St. Thomas.

. . . an act of an acquired virtue cannot be meritorious without charity: however, with charity there are infused other virtues; hence, an act of an acquired virtue cannot be meritorious unless through the medium of an infused virtue. For a virtue ordered to an inferior end does not perform an act ordered to a superior end, save through the medium of the superior virtue; just as fortitude, which is a virtue proper to man in so far as he is a man, does not ordain his act to a political good, save through the medium of fortitude which is a virtue proper to man in so far as he is a citizen.¹⁶⁴

In this passage it would appear that the virtue of fortitude, which perfects a man in so far as he is a man, is immediately directed by fortitude which perfects a man in so far as he is a citizen. We seem to have sufficient warrant from this question to conclude

¹⁶²Cf. our text, page 119.

¹⁶³Cf. our text page 117.

¹⁶⁴*De Virtutibus in Communi*, q. 1, a. 10, ad 4: . . . actus virtutis acquisitae non potest esse meritorious sine caritate; cum caritate autem simul infunditur aliae virtutes; unde actus virtutis acquisitae non potest esse meritorious nisi mediante virtute infusa. Nam virtus ordinata in finem inferiorem non facit actum ordinatum ad finem superiorem, nisi mediante virtute superiori; sicut fortitudo, quae est virtus hominis qua homo, non ordinat actum suum ad bonum politicum, nisi mediante fortitudine quae est virtus hominis in quantum est civis.

that the inferior virtue which is acquired prudence, is immediately moved and informed by its corresponding superior virtue which is the infused virtue of prudence. This indeed appears to be the teaching of the eminent Dominican, Garrigou-Lagrange.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, we may say that charity is the immediate form of the infused virtue of prudence, which in turn is the immediate form of the acquired virtue of prudence in so far as it is directed and referred to the end formally under the command of charity.

We have then the following inter-relation of grace and charity as the form of the acquired moral virtues. Because they are acquired, grace is *not* the form of the acquired moral virtues *per modum originis*. Grace is, however, their remote form, as the more ultimate cause of their meritorious acts. In this sense, we may say that grace is the immediate form of charity; charity is the immediate form of the acts of the infused habit of prudence; prudence informed by charity is the immediate form of the acquired habit of prudence in so far as it is capable of eliciting meritorious acts, and hence of all the other moral virtues which demand prudence that they may exist as perfect moral virtues.

We have spoken principally in this section of grace, and charity and prudence as the form of the meritorious acts of the acquired virtues. Did we mean to exclude that they are likewise the form of the habits of acquired moral virtues? No, it would seem that grace, and charity, and prudence are likewise the more general forms of the *perfectum esse virtutis* which, it would seem, the acquired virtues share *per modum transeuntis*, during the time they are being used under the immediate direction of some infused virtue, the more remote direction of charity, and the ultimate direction of grace.

3. The Information of the Intellectual Virtues

We must now determine the inter-relation of grace and charity

¹⁶⁵ Garrigou-Lagrange, R., *Les trois âges de la vie intérieure*, I, Note 1, page 83: Dans le juste, la charité commande ou inspire l'acte de la tempérance acquise par l'intermédiaire de l'acte simultané de la tempérance infuse. Et même en dehors de la production de leurs actes, ces deux vertus s'unissant dans la même faculté, l'infuse confirme l'acquise.

as the form of the intellectual virtues. These are five in number: understanding, wisdom, knowledge, art, and prudence.¹⁶⁶ Understanding is defined as a habit which perfects the intellect in its consideration of first speculative principles.¹⁶⁷ We can also come to the knowledge of truth by deducing it from another truth. A truth known in this way has the *ratio* of being the term of an intellectual process. Such a term can be simply ultimate in the genus of cognition, or it can be ultimate with respect to the whole compass of human cognition. Wisdom, the second of the intellectual virtues, is a habit which considers the highest causes, or those terms which are ultimate in all cognition. The third intellectual virtue is knowledge, which is defined as a habit which perfects the intellect in its consideration of those cognoscibles which are ultimate in some genus of cognition.¹⁶⁸ Art is defined as the *ratio recta aliquorum operum faciendorum*.¹⁶⁹ Prudence is defined as the *recta ratio agibilium*,¹⁷⁰ and although it can be classified among the moral virtues by reason of its matter, it is nonetheless, as we have seen, essentially an intellectual virtue.¹⁷¹

Of these five intellectual virtues, understanding, wisdom, and knowledge reside in the speculative intellect.¹⁷² Art and prudence reside in the practical intellect.¹⁷³ Therefore, understanding, wisdom and knowledge are known as the speculative intellectual virtues; art and prudence as the practical intellectual virtues.

Let us listen now to St. Thomas commenting on the relative perfection of these virtues as intellectual habits.

In any thing a virtue is so named by reason of its relation to good; for as the Philosopher says in 2 *Epic.* cap. 6, *in princ.*, a virtue of anything is what makes the one having it good, and which makes his work good; . . . According to this, any habit will have the

¹⁶⁶ *I-II*, q. 58, a. 4, corp. *De Virtutibus in Communi*, q. 1, a. 7, corp.

¹⁶⁷ *I-II*, q. 57, a. 2, corp.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *I-II*, q. 57, a. 3, corp.

¹⁷⁰ *I-II*, q. 57, a. 4, corp. *De Virt. Card.*, q. 1, a. 1, ad 3.

¹⁷¹ *De Virtutibus Cardinalibus*, q. 1, a. 1, ad 3.

¹⁷² *I-II*, q. 57, a. 1, corp. *De Virtutibus in Communi*, q. 1, a. 7, corp.

¹⁷³ *De Virtutibus in Communi*, q. 1, a. 7, corp.

ratio of virtue, because it is ordained to good. This comes about in a twofold way: in one way, formally; in another manner, materially. Formally, when some habit is ordained to good *sub ratione boni*; materially when it is ordained to that which is good, but not *sub ratione boni*. But goodness, *sub ratione boni*, is the object of the appetitive faculty alone; for good is that which all things seek. Therefore those habits which are in the appetitive [power], or depend on the appetitive faculty, are ordained formally to good; whence they have most especially the *ratio* of virtue. But those habits which are neither in the appetitive part, nor dependent on it, can indeed be ordained materially towards that which is good, but not, however, formally *sub ratione boni*; therefore they can in some manner be termed virtues, not however, properly as the first habits.¹⁷⁴

In this passage St. Thomas gives the barest essential for a virtue: that it have some respect to good. If it is ordained to good in the sense that it looks to what is good, but not under the *ratio* of goodness, that habit may be called a virtue improperly. If it looks to goodness under the very formality of goodness, that habit may be properly called a virtue. That a habit be ordained to good under the *ratio* of good, it must either reside in the appetitive faculty, or else it must be in some way dependent on

¹⁷⁴ *Op. cit.*, q. 1, a. 7, corp in princ: *Virtus in unaquaque re dicitur per respectum ad bonum; eo quod uniuscujusque virtus est, ut Philosophus dicit (2 Ethic. cap. 6 in princ.), quae bonum facit habentem, et opus ejus bonum reddit; . . . Ex hoc quidem igitur aliquis habebit rationem virtutis, quia ordinatur ad bonum. Hoc autem contingit dupliciter: uno modo formaliter, alio modo materialiter. Formaliter quidem, quando aliquis habitus ordinatur ad bonum *sub ratione boni*; materialiter vero, quando ordinatur, ad id quod est bonum, non tamen *sub ratione boni*. Bonum autem *sub ratione boni* est objectum solius appetitivae partis; nam bonum est quod omnia appetunt. Illi igitur habitus qui vel sunt in parte appetitiva, vel a parte appetitiva dependent, ordinantur formaliter ad bonum; unde potissime habent rationem virtutis. Illi vero habitus qui nec sunt in appetitiva parte, nec ab eadem dependent, possunt quidem ordinari materialiter in id quod est bonum, non tamen formaliter *sub ratione boni*; unde et possunt aliquo modo dici virtutes, non tamen ita proprie sicut primi habitus.*

that faculty. Having outlined the principles on which we are to base our judgment concerning the perfection of a virtue, St. Thomas now applies the principles to the intellectual virtues.

However, it must be known that both the speculative and practical intellect can be perfected by some habit in a twofold manner. In one way absolutely and *secundum se*; in so far as it precedes the will moving it; in another way in so far as it follows the will, eliciting its act according to the command of the will; . . . Therefore those habits which are in either the practical or the speculative intellect in the first manner, can be termed virtues in some way, but not according to the perfect *ratio* of virtues; and in this way understanding, knowledge and wisdom are in the speculative intellect, and art in the practical intellect.¹⁷⁵

Therefore, the intellectual habits of understanding, wisdom, knowledge, and art existing in the intellect prior to the command of the will, since they look to goodness materially and not formally are only improperly termed virtues. The first of these perfect the intellect merely in the consideration of truth;¹⁷⁶ they confer the ability to perform acts of understanding, wisdom, and knowledge, but they do not confer the perfection of the good use of that faculty.¹⁷⁷ Of themselves they do not move the faculty to its proper speculative act, much less do they confer any perfection ordered to an act *ad extra*, for the speculative intellect is not ordained to works *ad extra*.¹⁷⁸ The perfection bestowed by understanding, wisdom, and knowledge is limited to this: they

¹⁷⁵ *Op. cit., loc. cit. in med:* Sciendum est autem, quod intellectus tam speculativus quam practicus potest perfici dupliciter aliquo habitu. Uno modo absolute et secundum se; prout praecedit voluntatem, quasi eam movens; alio modo prout sequitur voluntatem, quasi ad imperium actum suum eliciens; . . . Illi igitur habitus qui sunt in intellectu pratico vel speculativo, primo modo, possunt dici aliquo modo virtutes, licet non ita secundum perfectam rationem; et hoc modo intellectus, scientia et sapientia sunt in intellectu speculativo, ars vero in intellectu pratico.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *Op. cit., q. 1, a. 7, ad 1.*

give the *posse* for a speculative intellectual act, nothing more.¹⁷⁹ Much the same is true of art. For art does not perfect a man in this sense that because of this habit he *actually* wishes to act in accord with the perfection bestowed by art, but only in the sense that through the perfection bestowed by art, he knows how to act well and has the *posse* to act well.¹⁸⁰ Art therefore bestows upon the practical intellect merely the *posse* to act well. It does not make the man who possesses it good, but makes the work performed good.¹⁸¹ That a man act well in *actu* is due not to art, but to prudence.¹⁸²

Among the intellectual virtues prudence holds a distinctive place, for it confers not only the *posse* of acting rightly upon the practical intellect, but it also confers the perfection of good use of that potency. This is so because by its very nature prudence looks to the appetitive faculty for it is dependent on that faculty for the very rectitude which it requires.¹⁸³ Prudence is therefore *per se* ordained to the appetitive faculty as to the source of the rectitude which it requires by its very nature,¹⁸⁴ so that the habit of prudence supposes some command of the appetitive faculty whereby it is made to share in the goodness proper to the will.¹⁸⁵

The Angelic Doctor now gives us the following summary of the dependence of the various intellectual virtues on the will. Wisdom, knowledge, and art (and understanding) depend in no way on the will save that the faculty which they perfect must be moved to act by the will.¹⁸⁶ Prudence depends on the will for its principle which is the end,¹⁸⁷ but not, however, for its object.¹⁸⁸ Of these intellectual habits, prudence, St. Thomas says, has more truly the *ratio* of virtue because it follows the

¹⁷⁹ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit., corp. in med.

¹⁸⁰ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit., corp. in fine.

¹⁸¹ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit., corp. in med.

¹⁸² *I-II*, q. 57, a. 4, corp. in princ.

¹⁸³ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit.

¹⁸⁴ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit.

¹⁸⁵ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit.

¹⁸⁶ *De Virtutibus in Communi*, q. 1, a. 7, corp. in fine.

¹⁸⁷ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit.

¹⁸⁸ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit., corp. in med.

command of the will,¹⁸⁹ and therefore through it man is made not only *potens vel sciens recte agere, sed volens*.¹⁹⁰

Now how are these acquired intellectual virtues said to be informed by grace and charity? It is obvious that grace cannot be their form *per modum originis* for the reason that these virtues are acquired. As regards charity, St. Thomas, so far as we know, does not expressly say that it is the form of the intellectual virtues. He does mention, however, that charity is the form of all the virtues, and that it is the form of all the acts of the virtues in so far as they are commanded by the will perfected by charity. Further, we know that merit is attributed primarily to charity because it is from the command of charity that the habits and the acts of virtue are ordinated to the *finis ultimus simpliciter* formally, and hence are meritorious. In this sense he refers to the acquired moral virtues as being informed by charity. The same thing should therefore be true of the relation of charity to the intellectual virtues. Now St. Thomas explicitly says that the acts of the intellectual virtues can be meritorious when they are commanded by the will.

Man can merit through an act of knowledge, or of any such habit according as the habit is commanded by the will, without which nothing is meritorious.¹⁹¹

Of course, when St. Thomas says merit comes from the command of the will, he means the will perfected by the habit of charity. This becomes clearer from a passage in the *Summa*.

From the fact that someone has the habit of speculative knowledge, he is not thereby inclined to use it; but he is made able to speculate concerning the truth with regard to those things about which he has knowledge. But that he uses the knowledge he has, is from the will moving; and therefore the virtue which perfects

¹⁸⁹ *Op. cit., loc. cit.*

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ *Op. cit., q. 1, a. 7, ad 5:* Per actum scientiae, aut alicujus talis habitus, potest homo mereri, secundum quod imperatur a voluntate, sine qua nullum est meritum.

the will, as charity or justice, makes him use well speculative habits of this kind. And in this way, even in acts of these habits there can be merit, if they are done out of charity.¹⁹²

It is evident therefore that the acts of these virtues can become meritorious in so far as they are commanded by the will perfected by charity. Hence, in that charity through its command refers and conjoins the acts of these virtues to the ultimate end formally, it may be called the form of the speculative virtues. However, where the act of a virtue is informed, the habit of virtue should indeed precontain that information. But, as we have seen, it does not seem that the habits of virtue are informed by the very habit of charity antecedently to the act of charity commanding, and this is especially true of the intellectual virtues since they have no connection with the will save in so far as this appetitive faculty perfected by charity moves the intellect to act. Therefore it seems logical to conclude that the act of charity moving the acts of the intellectual virtues to the *finis ultimus simpliciter* formally, informs both the act of the intellectual virtues and the virtues themselves. Therefore charity may be spoken of as the form of the *habits and of the acts* of these intellectual virtues. Further, we have seen that the superior faculty always acts through a form which it imposes. Therefore it would appear that the quiddity which flows from the act of charity commanding into the habits of the intellectual virtues elevates them at least *per modum transeuntis* to a participation in the *perfectum esse virtutis* proper to the infused virtues. We may speak then of charity as the formal cause at least *per modum transeuntis* of the *perfectum esse virtutis* of the intellectual habits of virtue: the impressed form derived from the habit of charity commanding is the more proximate effective cause of their meritorious acts;

¹⁹² *I-II*, q. 57, a. 1, corp. in fine: Ex hoc autem quod aliquis habet habitum scientiae speculativae, non inclinatur ad utendum; sed fit potens speculari verum in his quorum habet scientiam. Sed quod utatur scientia habita, hoc est movente voluntate: et ideo virtus quae perficit voluntatem, ut *charitas vel justitia*, facit etiam bene uti hujusmodi speculativis habitibus. Et secundum hoc etiam in actibus horum habituum potest esse meritum, si ex charitate fiant.

grace, the formal cause of the supernatural *esse*, would therefore be the remote effective cause of these meritorious acts.

However, charity is not the immediately proximate effective cause; the informed habit of prudence is more immediately directive of all the powers below it, both moral and intellectual, in so far as the proper acts of these virtues, even the speculative intellectual virtues, are moral acts, and hence *agibia*. For prudence is the *recta ratio agibilium*. But these intellectual virtues depend on prudence only when they are moved to act by the will. Now since they have no relation to the will save when moved to act, and since they are not connected one with the other,¹⁹³ it would seem that each intellectual virtue is informed distinctly and separately from the others when moved to act by the will perfected through the medium of informed prudence. And since the infused virtues execute the command of charity through a corresponding acquired virtue, it would appear that acquired prudence as directed by infused prudence under the command of charity is the simply immediate form of the intellectual virtues in so far as they share the *perfectum esse virtutis* in a transient manner.

The following conclusions concerning the information of the intellectual virtues by grace and charity are now in order. Grace is not the form of the very habits of intellectual virtue *per modum originis*. Grace is, however, the simply remote instrumental effective cause and form of the meritorious acts of the intellectual virtues. Charity is the immediate instrumental effective cause and form of the meritorious acts of infused prudence, which in turn is the immediate instrumental effective cause and form of the informed acquired virtue of prudence, which is the simply immediate effective form of the acts of the particular intellectual virtue commanded. And since every superior power commands the inferior power through an impressed form, grace, charity and prudence also inform the very habits of the intellectual virtue commanded, at least *per modum transeuntis*.

In conclusion let us quote two passages from St. Thomas wherein he treats of grace, charity, and prudence as the form of the virtues.

¹⁹³ *De Virt. Card.*, q. 1, a. 2, ad 8: *Virtutes intellectuales non sunt connexae ad invicem.*

The information of an act of virtue is threefold. In one way, in as much as the due conditions through whose limitations it is constituted *in medio virtutis* are apposed to the substance of the act; and the act of virtue has this from prudence: for the *medium virtutis* is received according to right reason as is said in *2 Ethic.* (cap. 6): and so prudence is said to be the form of all the moral virtues. An act of virtue thus constituted *in medio*, is, as it were, material with respect to reference to the ultimate end, which reference is apposed to the act of virtue from the command of charity; and thus charity is said to be the form of all the other virtues. Grace gives the more ultimate efficacy of meriting: for no value in our works is deemed worthy of eternal glory, unless divine acceptance has been presupposed; and so grace is said to be the form of charity and of the other virtues.¹⁹⁴

In this brief passage St. Thomas has brilliantly summarized most of the matter we have been at pains to analyze in detail. In so far as prudence constitutes the acts of the intellectual and moral virtues *in medio*, it is called the form of the virtues. In so far as charity refers these virtues to the ultimate end formally, it is called the form of the virtues. In so far as grace is the ultimate source of merit, it is called the form of charity and of the virtues. The immediate conclusion is that there can be many forms in any act of virtue, each form in some way ordained to another. This fact, St. Thomas elucidates nicely in a passage from the earliest work he penned.

¹⁹⁴ *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 5, ad 5: . . . Informatur autem actus virtutis tripliciter. Uno modo in quantum circa substantiam actus apponuntur debitae conditiones, per quarum limitationem in medio virtutis constituitur: et hoc habet actus virtutis a prudentia; nam medium virtutis accipitur secundum rationem rectam, ut dicitur in *2 Ethic.* (cap. 6): et sic prudentia dicitur forma omnium virtutum moralium. Actus autem virtutis sic constitutis in medio, est quasi materialis respectu ordinis in finem ultimum, qui quidem ordo apponitur actui virtutis ex imperio caritatis; et sic caritas dicitur esse forma omnium aliarum virtutum. Ulterius vero efficaciam merendi adhibet gratia: nullus enim operum nostrorum valor reputatur dignus aeternae gloriae, nisi praesupposita acceptatione divina; et sic gratia dicitur esse forma et caritatis et aliarum virtutum. Cf. *In III Sent.* dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3, ad 2.

Whence for the perfection of virtue in any potency, as many forms are demanded as there are potencies superior to that potency; reason is superior to the concupiscent appetite, as ordaining it; and therefore prudence, which is the perfection of reason, is the form of temperance, which is a concupiscent virtue.

Likewise the will is superior to reason in so far as the act of reason is considered voluntary and meritorious; and therefore charity is the form of prudence and of temperance.

Similarly the essence of the soul is superior to the will, in so far as from the essence the will and all the other powers of the soul flow. And therefore, grace which is the perfection of the essence of the soul constituting it in *esse spirituali*, is the form of charity, of prudence, and of temperance: nor would charity be a virtue if it were without grace, just as neither prudence would be if it were without charity, speaking of infused virtues ordained to merit; nor temperance without charity and prudence.¹⁹⁵

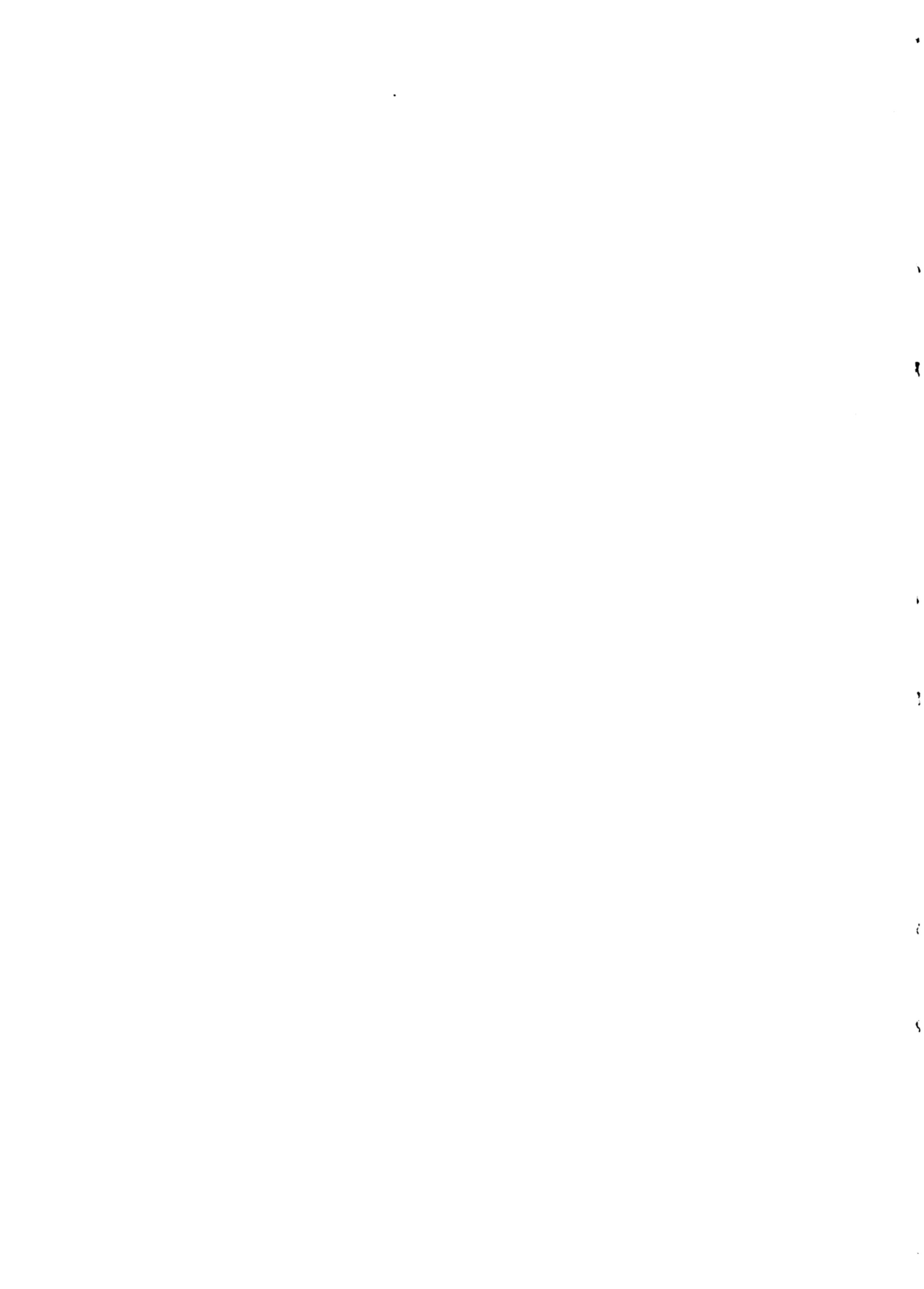
Hence, we may conclude that in any act of any virtue there are as many forms as there are habits superior to the eliciting virtue. And there is besides the proper form of the virtue eliciting the act. Thus, for example, a man in the state of grace performs an act of temperance for the love of God. In such an

¹⁹⁵ *In III Sent.* dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3, ad 2: . . . Unde ad perfectionem virtutis in aliqua potentia tot formae exiguntur quot superiora sunt respectu illius potentiae. Sicut ratio superior est quam concupiscibilis quasi ordinans ipsam. Et ideo prudentia quae est perfectio rationis, est forma temperantiae quae est virtus concupiscibilis.

Similiter voluntas est superior ratione, secundum quod actus rationis consideratur ut voluntarius et meritorius. Et ideo caritas est forma prudentiae et temperantiae.

Similiter essentia animae est superior voluntate, inquantum ab essentia et voluntas et omnes aliae vires animae fluunt. Et ideo gratia quae est perfectio essentiae animae, constituens ipsam in esse spirituali, est forma et caritatis, et prudentiae, et temperantiae. Nec caritas esset virtus si esset sine gratia, sicut nec prudentia si est sine caritate, loquendo de virtutibus infusis ordinatis ad merendum, neque temperantia sine caritate et prudentia.

act which is specifically an act of temperance and formally an act of charity, we find the following forms. First the proper form of temperance, the form of prudence whereby it is constituted *in medio*, the form of charity whereby it is ordained to the ultimate end formally, and the form of grace, the ultimate meritorious cause.



CHAPTER III

THE INFLUX OF CHARITY REQUIRED FOR A MERITORIOUS ACT

In attempting to determine the influx of charity required for a meritorious act, one is confronted with a multitude of problems and an almost overwhelming maze of opinions. It will be helpful therefore, before giving the more prominent opinions, to indicate certain accepted viewpoints, and certain divergencies in thought and terminology.

As regards elicited acts proceeding from the deliberate will of man, not all the authors are in agreement that such acts are necessarily either morally good or morally bad. In the time of St. Thomas this very point was much debated. His own master, Albert the Great, held strongly that there could not be a morally indifferent act.¹ St. Bonaventure² and, in a much more developed manner, Scotus³ maintained that there could be and frequently

¹ *In II Sent.* dist. 40, a. 4, Sol., p. 634: . . . non video qualiter . . . possit sustineri aliquid esse indifferens in operibus voluntatis deliberativa: quia aut erit otiosum, et tunc reputatur malum in Evangelio aut erit relatum, et tunc erit meritorium. Cf. Jean Rohmer, *La Finalité Morale Chez Les Théologiens De Saint Augustin à Duns Scot* (Etudes De Philosophie Médiévale, Directeur Etienne Gilson. XXVII, 1939) 52-96.

² *In II Sent.* dist. 41, q. 3, ad 5, p. 945: Est tamen medium inter bene esse moris et male esse moris pro eo quod bonitas moralis non se extendit ad omnes actiones sicut bonitas naturalis. Cf. *Op. cit.*, *loc. cit.* p. 943: Sicut caritas est principium omnium bonorum sic libido et concupiscentia est principium omnium malorum; sed multas actiones faciunt homines tota die quas non faciunt nec ex libidine nec ex charitate, immo vel ex amore naturali, vel sociali, vel ex quadam urbanitate civili et consuetudine operandi: non ergo videtur quod omnis actio voluntaria sit immediate bona vel mala . . . Inter bonum autem in genere et malum in genere cadit medium indifferens simpliciter, sicut velle comedere, vel velle levare festucam de terra, quae non dicunt bonitatem moris, vel malitiam. Cf. also, Rohmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 226-234.

³ *In II Sent.* Dist. 41, q. 1, p. 434: In prima bonitate et malitia, comparando ad actum naturalem, videtur posse inveniri actus indifferens, qui scilicet habeat determinatam speciem in genere naturae per comparationem ad omnes causas suas, et possit tamen habere indifferenter bonitatem moralem et malitiam. The reason he gives is that one does not

were morally indifferent acts *in concreto* which none-the-less flowed from the deliberate will of man. Following and developing the thought of his master, Thomas is unequivocal in stating that it is impossible to have a morally indifferent act *in concreto*; the act will be either morally good or morally bad; there is no medium.⁴ Further, Bonaventure⁵ and Scotus⁶ both taught that

have to act virtuously simply because he has the habit of virtue. Cf. op. cit., p. 435: *Similiter de actibus elicitis post virtutem, quia non videtur necessitas, quod voluntas habens virtutem, semper utatur ea necessario, sed tantum quando occurrit passio ita vehemens, quae subverteret rationem, nisi utatur virtute.* Cf. Montefortino, *Joanni Duns Scoti, Summa Theologica*, VIII, q. 18, a. 9, p. 195. Rohmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 285-294.

⁴ *In Sent.* Dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, Sol. in fine: *Nullus autem eorum qui voluntatem deliberatam sequitur indifferens erit, sed de necessitate vel bonus vel malus bonitate vel malitia civili; sed in illo qui gratiam habet, oportet vel meritorium vel demeritorium esse . . .* Cf. *I-II*, q. 18, a. 9, corp. in fine: *Unde necesse est omnem actum hominis a deliberativa ratione procedentem, in individuo consideratum, bonum esse vel malum.*

⁵ According to Bonaventure, even among those actions which proceed from a deliberate will there can be a medium. An action proceeding from a deliberate will and ordained to God is meritorious (*de condigno*) if it is *ex caritate*. If the action is ordained to God, but not from charity, it is meritorious *de congruo*. Cf. *In II Sent.* Dist. 27, a. 2, q. 2, corp. Now some actions proceeding from the deliberate will of man are not ordained to God, and this can come about in several ways; either because they are ordained to creatures by reason of their inordinateness, or they are not ordained to God because of the negligence of the one acting, or they are not ordained to God because of the weakness and misery of man. The first type of inordination is an evil of commission, the second an evil of omission and the third is not an evil but an indifferent action. The third type of inordination is exemplified by the man who without referring the action to God takes a needed walk. Cf. *In II Sent.* dist. 41, q. 1, a. 3, concl. p. 944. Rohmer, *op. cit.*, loc. cit.

⁶ In treating of deliberate acts which can be meritorious, Scotus distinguishes. Merit, he says, comes from the reference to the due end, which reference is from charity *inexistente*. Cf. *In II Sent.* dist. 41, q. 1, p. 435. Now an act can be referred to the ultimate end by charity in a three-fold way: actually, virtually, or habitually. It is actually referred when one actually thinking of the end, loves it, and wills something because of the end; virtually, when the love of the end brings it about that something is actually willed, though at the time the action is willed, the ultimate end is not actually thought of or loved; habitually, in that every act which can be referred to God, is said to be referred habitually to the end by the one having charity. Cf. *op. cit.*, loc. cit. Of these three intentions, the

a deliberate act of a person in the state of grace could in certain circumstances be indifferent with respect to merit; such an act would be neither meritorious nor demeritorious. What St. Thomas taught on this point will appear later in the chapter.

All the authors, however, admit that in order to be meritorious first certainly makes the act meritorious, the second probably does. *Op. cit., loc. cit.*: De duobus primis, certum est quod primus actus est meritorius, et satis probabile est de secundo.

Further, the Subtle Doctor teaches that actions can be *not* referred to the ultimate end in a threefold way: *negative absolute*, when they are not referred to the ultimate end either actually, or virtually; *privative*, when from its nature it cannot be referred, as is the case with venial sin; *contrarie*, as is the case with mortal sin which destroys charity. *Op. cit., loc. cit.*: Triplici autem modo potest dici actus non referri. Uno modo negative absolute, quia non refertur actualiter nec virtualiter. Alio modo privative, quia non est natus referri, sicut peccatum veniale, quia licet stat cum charitate, non est tamen natum cum charitate referri in finem. Tertio modo contrarie, scilicet quia corrumpit principium referendi, scilicet charitatem, ut peccatum mortale.

As regards those acts which are referred habitually and negatively, it is doubtful whether they are to be classed as meritorious, as venial sins, or indifferent . . . that is, indifferent with respect to merit. Scotus thinks that this type of deliberate action is to be called indifferent for it does not have sufficient reason to be called venial sin, since in many of them there is no deordination. Further, man does not seem bound to refer every action to God actually or virtually, because God has not obliged us to this; on the other hand, there does not seem to be sufficient goodness in such an act that it be meritorious, for no less a reference than a virtual reference suffices for merit, which the habitual reference does not give. Cf. *Op. cit.*, pp. 435, 436: Ideo probabile videtur tales actus indifferentes ponere, quia non habent sufficientem rationem malitia pertinenter ad peccatum veniale, quia possible est nullam deordinationem esse in eis, quae sufficiat ad rationem peccati. Non enim tenetur homo, nec tentione necessitatis, contra quam sit peccatum mortale, nec tentione minori, contra quam sit peccatum veniale, referre semper actum suum in Deum actualiter vel virtualiter, quia Deus non obligavit nos ad hoc, neque videtur esse in istis actibus sufficere ad meritum quam relatio virtualis, qualis non est hic.

Therefore, Scotus concludes, there can be many elicited human acts which are indifferent to merit. *Op. cit.*, p. 436: Sunt ergo multi actus indifferentes, . . . et sunt etiam indifferentes ad bonum meritorium et malum demeritorium, quia unum individuum potest esse tale et aliud tale. Multi etiam singulares actus eliciti sunt indifferentes qui nec sunt tales neque tales, et non solum actus non humani, . . . sed etiam de actibus libere elicitis.

the work done must be supernatural, and that it must be ordained to God by charity. But they are not agreed as to whether an actual, virtual, or habitual reference of charity is sufficient for that ordination. Further, they disagree as to whether the act must be performed from some supernatural motive in order to be supernatural and hence meritorious. And finally, among those who require a supernatural motive, there is no agreement as to whether the motive must be at least virtually charity, or whether any motive supplied by faith is sufficient.

In studying the opinions of the various authors we shall see that five different types of reference are predicated of charity, termed respectively actual, virtual, objective, habitual and innate or connatural reference.⁷

Generally speaking, the authors are in accord concerning the meaning of an actual reference, and an habitual reference of charity. The actual reference takes its rise either from an elicited act of charity, or from an *actus imperatus caritatis* whose act moves the act of another virtue to its own proper end from an actual or virtual intention of charity.⁸

The habitual reference of charity takes its rise from the very existence of the habits of grace and charity, and in no way presupposes an act of charity either actually or virtually moving the acts of inferior virtue to the proper end of charity from the motive of charity.⁹

The innate or connatural reference, terminology seemingly inaugurated by Suarez and adopted by Mazzella, like the habitual reference, does not suppose any preceding act of charity but takes its rise from the necessary connection existing between any virtue and the habit of charity. It consists in the natural inclination of any act of virtue to the proper end of charity.¹⁰

⁷ Suarez, Francis, *Opera X* lib. 12 (De Merito) c. 9, n. 1, p. 48. Mazzella, Camillus, *De Virtutibus Infusis*, n. 1341, pp. 758, 759.

⁸ Suarez, F., *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.* Mazzella, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.* Gonet, J. B., *Clypeus Thomisticus*, V, tr. 9, disp. 2, a. 6, n. CXXXII, p. 84.

⁹ Suarez, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.* Mazzella, *op. cit.*, n. 1341, p. 758. Gonet, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

¹⁰ Suarez, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.* Mazzella, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

The virtual reference of charity presents a problem. A very general definition which allows for many of the varying attempts to determine the exact influx of charity necessary for a virtual reference of charity, is given by Gonet: *A virtual reference is that which is contained in virtue of a preceding act (of charity) through which such an operation has been ordained to God.*¹¹ The various authors, while they would accept such a general definition, are not in agreement concerning either the exact duration and mode of charity's influx into the subsequent acts, nor are they agreed as to the universality of the acts such a previous act of charity could affect. No wonder they disagree in giving a specific definition of the virtual reference! When we discuss the view of those who maintain that a virtual reference of charity is necessary for merit, we shall indicate these divergencies in opinion.

For the present, let us point out this fact. Some say that a single act of charity once made and never retracted, is sufficient to ordain all subsequent acts of whatever kind to the proper end of charity. To their minds this is sufficient to constitute the virtual reference of charity. However, Suarez and Mazzella deny that the influx from such a universal ordination could last for a lifetime; according to them the causal effectiveness of such a universal ordination would gradually dissipate itself. Hence, while admitting such a reference of charity is more than habitual, to them it seems also less than virtual, so that they speak of it as an objective reference.¹²

Now the various references are not the same thing as intention. Some of the references of charity already discussed are the result of intention. Others exist independently of the intention of charity. It would seem that the actual reference of charity is the result of the actual intention of charity. Further, it would be said that the virtual reference of charity is the result of the virtual intention. However, authors of acknowledged ability

¹¹ Gonet, *op. cit.*, loc. cit., p. 84: *Suppono . . . posse dari relationem seu ordinationem actus in Deum: nempe . . . virtualem, quae continentur in virtute actus praecedentis, per quem talis operatio in Deum fuit relata.*

¹² Suarez, *op. cit.*, loc. cit. Mazzella, *op. cit.*, loc. cit.

maintain that the so-called virtual intention is really an actual intention *in virtute*, or an actual-virtual intention, as it is sometimes expressed.¹³ Consequently, for them the virtual reference would likewise be due to an intention which is actual not *in actu*, but *in virtute*. The objective reference of charity presupposes some previous actual intention of charity whose causal effect no longer perdures after a time, so that eventually the reference of charity comes really from the habits of charity and grace. As we have seen, no intention of charity is required for either the habitual or innate reference of charity.

Further, one must not confuse the very act of charity *in actu signato* with the actual intention of charity. For, as we have seen, according to some authors it is quite possible to have an actual reference of charity apart from the actual intention of charity *in actu*. In such a case the intention of charity does not arise from the act of charity *in actu signato*, but from the *virtus* of charity which remains after a previous, formal act of charity *in actu signato*, which *virtus* here and now refers the act of an inferior virtue to the end from the intention of charity.

Finally, it should be noted that among contemporary theologians the terms *virtual intention* and *habitual intention* have very disparate meanings. It was not always so with the contemporaries of St. Thomas. St. Bonaventure,¹⁴ for example, sometimes uses the term *habitual intention* to signify the concept denoted by *virtual intention* in our own time.

¹³ Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, tr. 11, disp. 7, dub. 2, n. 40. De Lugo, *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, S. V., n. 72. Tournely, *De Sacramentis in Genere*, q. 7, a. 1; 3rd. Concl.

¹⁴ Bonaventure, *In II Sent. dist. 41, q. 1, a. 3, ad 6*, p. 946: *Habitualem autem relationem voco, non quia habeat caritatem, per quam sit habilis ad referendum; sed quia in primordio operationis illius vel alterius ad quam illa consequenter se habet, intentionem habet ad Deum directam.* Unde si aliquis intendit dare pro Deo centum marcas et incipit dare et cogitat de Deo in prima marca, et in aliis non cogitat; nihilominus tamen omnes dationes illae sunt ei meritoriae et fructuosac. Si autem opus alterius generis inciperet, oporteret, quod intentio renovaretur ad hoc, quod opus esset meritorious.

ARTICLE I

THE VARIOUS OPINIONS

So many and varied are the opinions of theologians concerning the influx of charity required for a meritorious act, that we must content ourselves with giving at first a very general division. We shall attempt to be more specific by subdividing the various views under more particular heads. There are two schools of thought on this difficult question: 1) those who think that no formal, elicited act of charity need precede in order that all our morally good actions may be meritorious, provided we are in the state of grace; 2) those who require that some formal, elicited act of charity must precede in order that our subsequent morally good acts may be meritorious.

A. The First View

Under this general classification we shall discuss the views proposed or advocated by Vasquez, Billot, Suarez, Mazzella and shall attempt to indicate the points of agreement and divergence.

1. The Opinion of Vasquez

According to this author, the good works of the just man, by the very fact that they are performed by him, are meritorious of eternal life. There is no need of any preceding reference of charity; for by the very fact that the works are good and performed by a man in the state of grace, they are by their very nature referred to God.¹⁵ To Vasquez, this opinion seems more probable because more conformable to Scripture and to the Councils.¹⁶

¹⁵ Vasquez, *Commentariorum ac Disputationum In Primam Secundae Sancti Thomae*, Disp. 217, c. 4, p. 591: . . . existimo omnia bona opera iustorum, eo ipso quod bona sunt et ab homine iusto esse meritoria vitae aeternae absque ulla alia relatione praecedente; quia hoc ipso quod bona sunt et ab homine iusto in Deum suapte natura referentur.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, c. 2, p. 586.

From among others Vasquez chooses the following Scripture texts to support his view: "*For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother.*"¹⁷ "*Thou shalt love . . . thy neighbor as thyself.*"¹⁸ In both these texts, Vasquez points out there is no reference of charity insisted on other than the habit of charity which is presupposed. In the first instance, he who does the will of God will be His mother and sister, which is to say, will merit eternal life. The requisite is simply that one do the will of God; there is no specification that it be done from some preceding motive of charity. In the second instance, one shall gain eternal life if he loves the neighbor as himself. Again, there is no necessity of a preceding act of charity, or of any special supernatural motive.¹⁹

Another, and a favorite text, is the following: "*Then the king will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; naked and you covered me; sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me.'*"²⁰ In this passage the various moral works of mercy are mentioned, and to their performance the reward of eternal life is granted. There is no mention of a preceding act of charity being required; the habit of charity which is always supposed, suffices. Consequently, the moral virtues without any other reference of charity than that which comes from the very habit of charity, are meritorious of eternal life.²¹

Vasquez also appeals to the Council of Trent in support of his view. In the fourteenth session, the eighth chapter, the Council makes the following statement.

Add to this, that while we by making satisfaction suffer for our sins, we are made conformable to Christ

¹⁷ Matthew, 12, 50.

¹⁸ Luke, 10, 25-27.

¹⁹ Vasquez, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

²⁰ Matthew, 25, 34.

²¹ Vasquez, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

Jesus who satisfied for our sins, *from whom is all our sufficiency*, (*Cf. II Cor. 3, 5*) having thence also a most certain pledge, that *if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him.* (*Cf. Rom. 8, 17*).²²

Therefore, Vasquez concludes, it is evident from the mind of the Council that by the very same works by which we make satisfaction for the punishment due us, we are also made conformable to Christ, and are promised eternal glory with him. But we make satisfaction by morally good works and passions even though they be not commanded by charity, nor take their rise from charity. Hence, it must be that even though works are not done from the command of charity, they are meritorious of eternal life.²³

This author appeals now to the sixth session of Trent, the tenth chapter, which treats of justification, to establish his viewpoint. The text follows.

Having, therefore, been thus justified and made the *friends and domestics of God, advancing from virtue to virtue, they are renewed*, as the Apostle says, *day by day*, that is, *mortifying the members of their flesh, and presenting them as instruments of justice unto sanctification*, they, through the observance of the commandments of God and of the Church, *faith cooperating with good works*, increase in that justice received through the grace of Christ and are further justified, as it is written: *He that is just, let him be justified still; and, that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.* This increase of justice holy Church asks

²² DBU, 904: *Accedit ad haec, quod, dum satisfaciendo patimur pro peccatis nostris satisfecit (Rom. 5, 10: I Jo. 2, 1sq) ex quo omnis nostra sufficientia est (2 Cor. 3, 5), conformes efficimur, certissimam quoque inde arrham habentes, quod, si compatimur, et conglorificabimur, (Cf. Rom. 8, 17).*

²³ Vasquez, *op. cit.*, c. 3, p. 589: *Constat igitur ex mente Concilii, eodem opere quo patiendo satisfacimur pro poena et peccata relictis, conformes nos effici Christo, et gloriam aeternam cum ipso habendam promereri. Satisfacimur autem per opera bona moralia et passiones etiam a caritate non imperatas, neque susceptos: Ergo per haec opera etiam vitam aeternam promeremur.*

for when she prays, “*Give unto us, O Lord, an increase of faith, hope, and charity*”:²⁴

From this passage Vasquez draws the following conclusion. The Council remarks that those who are justified are justified still. And this is brought about by any moral work even without a present or past reference due to the act of charity, so that through these moral works we show forth our members as instruments of justice by the observance of the commandments and the laws of the Church. Therefore by them we increase in holiness, so that little by little we become more holy. Hence, it must be that such moral works performed with only the habitual relation of charity, are acceptable to God, and meritorious of eternal life.²⁵

One more quotation from the sixth session of Trent, the sixteenth chapter, is alleged in support of this view.

For since Christ Jesus Himself as the *head into the members* and the *vine into the branches* continually infuses strength into those justified, which strength always precedes, accompanies and follows their good works, and without which they could not in any manner be pleasing and meritorious before God, we must be-

²⁴ DBU, 803: *Sic ergo iustificati et amici Dei ac domestici* (Io. 15, 15; Eph. 2, 19) *facti, euntes de virtute in virtutem* (Ps. 83, 8), *renovantur* (ut Apostolus inquit) *de die in diem* (2 Cor. 4, 16), *hoc est, mortificando membra carnis* (Col. 3, 5) *suae et exhibendo ea arma iustitiae* (Rom. 6, 13, 19) *in sanctificationem per observationem mandatorum Dei et Ecclesiae:* *in ipsa iustitia per Christi gratiam accepta, cooperante fide bonis operibus* (Iac. 2, 22), *crescunt atque magis iustificantur* (can. 24, et 32), *sicut scriptum est: “Qui iustus est, iustificetur adhuc”* (Apc. 22, 11) *et iterum: “Ne verearis usque ad mortem iustificari”* (Eccli. 18, 22) *et rursus: “Videtis, quoniam ex operibus iustificatur homo et non ex fide tantum”* (Iac. 2, 24). *Hoc vero iustitiae incrementum petit sancta Ecclesia, cum orat: Da nobis, Domine, fidei, spei et caritatis augmentum* (Dom. 13, post. Pent.)

²⁵ Vasquez, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*: *Sic ergo iustificati . . . qui justus est, iustificatur adhuc. Quaelibet autem opera moralia, etiam sine ulla relatione in finem charitatis . . . nempe aut ex praeterita aut ex praesenti voluntate talia sunt, ut illis exhibeamus membra nostra arma iustitiae per observationem mandatorum Dei et Ecclesiae: Ergo illis ita crescemos in sanctitate, ut vere sanctiores in diis evadamus.*

lieve that nothing further is wanting to those justified to prevent them from being considered to have, by those very works which have been done in God, fully satisfied the divine law according to the state of this life and to have truly merited eternal life, to be obtained in its due time, (provided they depart in grace,) since Christ our Saviour says: "*If anyone shall drink of the water that I will give him, he shall not thirst forever, but it shall become in him a fountain of water springing up unto life everlasting.*"²⁶

Since, Vasquez points out, the Council says that this help of grace always precedes the good works of the just, it must clearly be speaking of all the works of the just, not just some of them. If indeed this help of grace preceded just some good works and not all, it would not have been correct in saying grace precedes and accompanies all the good works of the just. Nor can we understand by good works just some works, namely, those which would be meritorious. To draw this conclusion from the fact that the Council says the grace of Christ always precedes this kind of work and that therefore nothing is lacking them that they be meritorious, would certainly be unfelicitous, for such a statement would be a useless repetition. Rather, the meaning is that the grace of Christ precedes and accompanies all the good works of the just, and that therefore nothing is lacking to them that they might satisfy the law of God and be meritorious.²⁷

²⁶ DBU, 809: Cum enim ille ipse Christus Jesus tanquam *caput in membra* (Eph. 4, 15) et tanquam *vitis in palmites* (Io. 15, 5) in ipsos iustificatos iugiter virtutem influat, quae virtus bona eorum opera semper antecedit, comitatur et subsequitur, et sine qua nullo pacto Deo grata et meritoria esse possent (can. 2): nihil ipsis iustificatis amplius desse credendum est, quominus plene illis quidem operibus, quae in Deo sunt facta, divinae legi pro huius vitae statu satisfecisse, et vitam aeternam suo etiam tempore (si tamen in gratia decesserint [Apc. 14, 13]) consequendam vere promeruisse censeantur (can. 32), cum Christus Salvator noster dicat: *Si quis biberit ex aqua, quam ego dabo ei, non sitiet in aeternum, sed fiet in eo fons aquae salientis in vitam aeternam* (Io. 4, 13sq).

²⁷ Vasquez, *op. cit.*, pp. 589-590: Cum igitur dicat Concilium, hoc auxilium gratiae semper praecedere bona justorum opera, aperte intelligit omnia opera, non aliqua. Si enim solum antecederet etc., . . . quaedam opera, et non omnia, non recte dixisset: *Bona eorum opera semper antecedit,*

Finally, Vasquez seeks to confirm his position by the refutation of opposing opinions.

His first argument is put in the form of a dilemma. He says that in a work commanded by charity we have the following possibilities. Either the only goodness in an act of virtue commanded by charity, comes from the affection of charity; or in meritorious works which are commanded by charity, besides the goodness of charity there is also the goodness of the virtue commanded. The first possibility would mean that the whole nature of merit would be placed in the act of charity so that in no way would the works of the other virtues be meritorious, which, in the opinion of Vasquez, is absurd. The second possibility, to Vasquez's way of thinking, seems too difficult to maintain.

If the whole measure of merit is drawn from the goodness of charity alone, the other virtues will have nothing of merit, which is absurd, for the Scriptures clearly promise eternal life to works other than those commanded by charity as is the case in *I Cor. 15*, "*abundate in omni opere bono*," which text the Council of Trent uses to exhort the faithful to every good work in order that their efforts may not be for the future useless and without reward. Likewise the exhortation of our Lord to give alms in secret so that our heavenly Father would repay us²⁸ would also be meaningless if there were not a reward proper to the acts of this virtue. If the goodness of the virtue other than charity is said to have its own proper essence demanding merit, and is said to be dependent on charity only as a necessary condition that its act be meritorious, it is true that such a position does not derogate from the dignity of charity or the other virtues, but it is without any

comitatur, et subsequitur. Neque vero per bona opera intelligere potuit quaedam opera, quae scilicet essent meritoria: quoniam inepte colligeret ex eo quod gratia Christi antecedit semper opera meritoria, nihil illis deesse quominus essent meritoria: esset enim inutilis repetitio. Contra vero ex eo quod gratia Christi antecedat et comitetur opera quaecumque bona justorum, recte colligit, nihil illis deesse, quominus et legi Dei satisfaceant et meritoria sint.

²⁸ Matthew, 6, 3-4: But when thou givest alms, do not let thy left hand know what thy right hand is doing, so that thy alms may be given in secret; and thy Father, who sees in secret, will reward thee.

firm fundament, for this is not one of the conditions demanded by Trent for a meritorious act.²⁹

Further, since man by keeping the commandments of God from the motive of any virtue becomes daily more and more just, he must likewise become more and more worthy of eternal reward, since he is already in the state required for merit. Were this not so, it would frequently happen that our acts of faith and hope, for example, would not be meritorious, for they do not always proceed from the affection of charity.³⁰

Nor is this affection of charity required even for the acquired moral virtues. For although the acts of these virtues are not supernatural *quoad substantiam* nevertheless, since they are done by the sons of God, and according to the will of God, they have

²⁹ Vasquez, *op. cit.*, c. 4, p. 591: Aut in opere imperato a charitate est sola bonitas virtutis charitatis ex relatione et affectu charitatis, a quo opus imperatur et hoc modo sequitur totam rationem meriti in ipsa charitate positam esse, ita ut nihil proveniat meriti operi bono ex aliis virtutibus et earum bonitate quod videtur absurdum: sic enim sola charitas esset cui corona iustitiae deberetur, aliis autem virtutibus nihil omnino praemii aeternae vitae responderet. Aut in operibus meritoriis imperatis a charitate, praeter bonitatem charitatis manet bonitas alterius virtutis et hoc etiam iuxta priorem sententiam difficile est. Quia aut tota mensura meriti sumitur ex sola bonitate charitatis, et ita caeterae virtutes nihil habebunt meriti aeternae vitae, quod ut dixi, absurdum est, alioquin in Scriptura aliis bonis operibus promissum esset praemium aeternae vitae, quod est contra illud I Cor. 15, *Abundate omni opere bono*, quo testimonio . . . utitur Concilium Tridentinum ut exhortetur simul cum ipso Paulo fideles ad omne opus bonum, eo quod labor earum non fit futurus inanis et sine praemio. Frustra etiam Christus hortaretur Matt. 6 ad faciendam elemosynam in abscondito, cui Pater coelestis reddet mercedem . . . Aut denique bonitati aliarum virtutum respondet aliqua ratio meriti et non soli relationi et bonitati charitatis; sed talis relatio requiritur solum tanquam conditio necessaria ut opus sit meritorium; sicut etiam quod fiat opera in statu gratiae et sanctitatis ab homine justo est conditio necessaria ad eundem effectum, ita tamen ut ipsa bona opera secundum suam bonitatem peculiaris virtutis aeternae vitae meritoria sint et hoc licet non ita deroget dignitati aliorum virtutum ac si totam rationem meriti ad charitatem revocaremus: nihilominus nonnihil derogat bonis operibus aliorum virtutum . . . absque ullo firme fundamento asseritur, cum talem conditionem inter reliquas Concilium Tridentinum non exposcat.

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit.

a sufficient proportion with the supernatural reward to make them worthy of it.³¹

Finally, Vasquez points out that some hold that all the works of a just man are meritorious of eternal life because by the first act of the will through which man is justified they are referred to the ultimate end. He cannot agree with this opinion; first, because such a first motion of the will would not efficaciously refer all the works that followed to God as to the ultimate end.³² Secondly, because if such a reference were necessary, it would happen that many good works of the just man would be indifferent as respects merit. For it can happen, and often does happen, that a man is justified in the sacrament of Penance even without such affection for God, and yet his works as well as the works of the man justified outside the sacrament, are frequently referred to God without this affection from Charity.³³

Therefore, Vasquez concludes, all the good works of the just man, from the very fact that they are good and performed by one who is just, are meritorious of eternal life, without any reference of charity or any other supernatural motive being necessary. These good works are by their very nature referred to God as to the ultimate end.³⁴

Hence for Vasquez, the state of grace, and by concomitance the habit of charity, and a morally good work are all that are required for a meritorious act. No *intention* of charity whether actual or virtual is required. The habitual reference of charity to the end arising from the very habit of charity antecedently to any act of charity commanding, is sufficient. Among others,

³¹ *Ibid.*: Et quavis opera moralium virtutum adquisitarum non sint supernaturalis ordinis secundum se et substantiam suam, tamen hoc ipso quod fiunt a filiis Dei habentibus adoptionis gratiam et illa sunt, secundum voluntatem Dei, idoneam habet proportionem cum praemio supernaturali ut illo digna sint.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Op. cit.*, c. 4, p. 591. *Quotation ut supra.*

Lercher,³⁵ Davis,³⁶ Loiano,³⁷ Lamiroy,³⁸ and Parente³⁹ subscribe to this view.

2. Opinion of Billot

Billot denies the sufficiency for merit of that reference of charity arising merely from the presence of the habit of grace.⁴⁰ On the other hand, it is not possible to have, nor is there required, a reference to the end due to an express actual intention.⁴¹ As regards that reference to the end which comes from the virtual intention, Billot remarks that it does not labor under the same difficulties as the one immediately preceding, and is indeed quite adapted to human nature.⁴² Nevertheless, it is not satisfactory because it does not take into consideration all possible cases, as for example, that of the man justified by the sacrament of Penance and attrition who, before eliciting an act of charity,

³⁵ Lercher, L., *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae*, IV/1, n. 116d, p. 112; n. 168b, p. 170.

³⁶ Davis, H., *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, I, c. 3, sect. 6, p. 48.

³⁷ Loiano, P. S., *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, I, n. 96, p. 137.

³⁸ Lamiroy, H., "Conditiones operis ad meritum condignum" *Collationes Brugensis* 28 (1928) 274-282.

³⁹ Parente, P., *Anthropologia Supernaturalis* (Collectio Theologica Romana V), p. 175.

⁴⁰ Billot, L., *De Gratia*, q. 114, th. 20, p. 242: Verum non satis est ad meritum quod bonum opus ex habituali gratia procedens, susceptivum sit ordinationis in finem charitatis. Sub hac enim consideratione adhuc intelligitur ut in potentia, nondum ut in actu formatum ultima forma bonitatis, quae ultima est forma et meriti.

⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 243: Sane vero, non solum non esset necesse omne opus bonum iusti esse meritorium, sed ne possibile quidem id foret, si ad rationem meritorii requireretur relatio in finem charitatis per expressam intentionem actualem.

⁴² *Ibid.*: Succedit igitur modus aliis, adhuc quidem per intentionem expressam, sed vel actualem vel virtualem tantum . . . Porro iste modus iam non laborat eadem impossibilitate qua praecedens, imo vero conditioni humanae apprime accommodatur.

executes acts of hope, religion, etc.⁴³ In Billot's opinion, of course, such acts are meritorious.⁴⁴

His own solution, he says, is built on two solid principles. First, that every act of virtue, being free and deliberate, is both an *actus elicitus* and an *actus imperatus*. This is particularly evident in the act of faith which is elicited by the intellect and commanded by the will. But the same thing holds true even of those acts which are proper to the will alone. For between the instinctive and deliberate acts of the will there is an essential and proper difference; namely, that the first are elicited only; the second are at once elicited and commanded by the will.⁴⁵

Nor is there any difficulty in the fact that the will commands itself; in fact, it cannot be otherwise; for it is necessary that in any deliberate act, the will reflecting upon itself, not only wills, but moves and applies itself to willing, which is to command itself to will. Such is the first principle.⁴⁶

⁴³ *Op. cit.*, p. 244: Verumtamen, nondum omnino satisfit conditionibus quaestionis praesentis. Nondum enim assignatus est modus necessario comprehendens omnes casus possibles, i.e. omnio iustorum opera bona pro quacumque hypothesi; sicut patet exemplo praesertim hominis in sacramento iustificati cum sola attritione, qui ante elicitum charitatis actum, exercebat opera caeterarum virtutum, puta fidei, spei, religionis . . . atque ita porro.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Op. cit.*, q. 114, th. 19, pp. 225-234. This truth is, of course, necessarily implied in the objection immediately preceding.

⁴⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 246: Occurrunt tamen duo principia, eaque non conficta, sed verissima, ex quibus forsitan desideratam licebit deducere solutionem. Primum principium est, quod omnis actus virtutis, utpote liber ac deliberatus, duplicitate consideratur, ut elicitus nempe, et ut imperatus. Evidentius id quidem patet in actu fidei, qui elicitive ab intellectu est, imperative a voluntate. Sed et in iis quoque quae sunt solius voluntatis eadem distinctio satis aperta reperitur. Ea enim est inter actus voluntatis instintivos et deliberatos essentialis et propria differentia, quod priores a voluntate eliciuntur tantum, posteriores vero ab eadem voluntate eliciuntur simul et imperantur. Cf. *I-II*, q. 17, a. 5 to which Billot appeals for confirmation.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* Neque ut opinor, difficultatem quis inveniet in eo quod voluntas imperet ipsa sibi; imo videbit aliter omnino esse non posse, quia oportet ut in quolibet actu deliberato voluntas super seipsam reflectens, non solum velit, verum etiam moveat et applicet se ad volendum, quod est imperare. Tale igitur est principium primum.

The second principle, no less certain according to Billot, is that the habit of charity, having for its object the end *sub ratione finis*, by its very nature perfects the will, not towards eliciting, but towards commanding all good and indifferent acts to its own end which is God, the object of beatitude. Indeed, all the virtues can and do sometimes command the acts of the other virtues; as for example, religion sometimes commands the acts of temperance, or mercy. However, this is, as it were, *per accidens*, not from the very nature of religion, but through the medium of the expressed intention of the agent operating. The reason for this is that these virtues are concerned with particular ends which do not have a necessary subordination among themselves. But charity is concerned with the universal and ultimate end, so that to charity, from the very nature of things, there is due the subjection of all particular ends. From which fact, it is effected that it belongs to the very essence of the habit of charity to perfect the will not only with respect to the act of love, but with respect to commanding any virtuous work whatsoever, and that *per se* and *ratione sui*. This will be so even when there is no advertence to the proper end of charity and the will is moved only by the motive supplied by some inferior virtue.⁴⁷

Having given these two principles, Billot now explains how

⁴⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp. 246-247: Succedit et alterum non minoris certitudinis, et est in hoc, quod habitus charitatis, utpote habens pro obiecto finem sub ratione finis, ipsa sua natura perficit voluntatem, non dico ad eliciendum, sed ad imperandum omnes quotquot esse possunt actus, in ipsum finem qui Deus est beatitudinis obiectum, referibiles. Evidem caeterae quoque virtutes hoc habent, ut imperare possint et imperent quandoque aliarum virtutum actus: sicut religio exempli gratia imperat quandoque actus temperantiae, misericordiae . . . Id tamen, quod apprime notandum est, quasi per accidens, hoc est, non ex sola natura sua, sed mediante expressa operantis intentione sive ordinatione. Et ratio est in promptu, quia virtutes istae sunt circa fines particulares, qui non habent necessariam subordinationem inter se. At charitas est circa finem universalem et ultimum, cui ex natura rei debetur omnimoda omnium finium particularium subiectio. Quo fit ut sit in essentia habitus charitatis perficere voluntatem, non modo ad amoris seu dilectionis actum, verum etiam ad imperium cuiuscumque virtuosi operis, idque per se et ratione sui, etiam quando nulla est ad proprium charitatis finem advertentia, sed ex solo inferioris virtutis motivo voluntas movetur.

charity necessarily flows into each and every work of the just, even before any elicited act of charity.

A habit, when it is present, necessarily and always flows into whatever of itself perfects the faculty, without there being any need of reflection or of any special intention, because whenever the faculty places an act which is contained within the compass of the habit, by that very fact, the faculty operates precisely as perfected by the habit. Now, if the habit of charity perfects the will, as it does directly, immediately and *per se*, to love, and to command the works of the other virtues, it follows that in one having grace, there can be no act of a particular virtue, even though placed only from the motive of that virtue, which is not informed by charity. If it be not formed *in actu signato*, by reason of the special and expressed intention whether actual or virtual, then at least it is informed *in actu exercito*, by reason of the influx of the *imperium* from charity which the simple and unadorned exercise of any good work always carries with it, in the manner we have explained above.⁴⁸

We may summarize Billot's opinion as follows. Some reference of charity is required for merit. The habitual reference of charity, arising from the mere presence of grace and charity is not sufficient. To supply the reference of charity needed, no previous act of charity is required, nor advertence to the end, nor any special intention of charity or any other supernatural motive.

⁴⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 247: Etenim, ut dictum est supra, (Cf. p. 240) *habitus*, ubi adest, necessario et semper influit in omne id ad quod ex sese perficit facultatem, quin ad hoc reflexione opus sit, aut speciali intentione, quia quandocumque facultas ponit actum qui in orbe *habitus* invenitur, eo ipso, non nuda facultas sed facultas *habituata* oppoteretur necesse est. Nunc ergo, si voluntatem perficit *charitas*, (et quidem directe, immediate, et *per se*), tum ad hoc quod est diligere, tum ad hoc quod est imperare caeterarum opera virtutum, puta ad hoc quod est velle credere, velle sperare, velle orare, velle poenitere et sic de aliis: ultiro consequitur quod in habente gratiam, nullus esse potest particularis virtutis actus, etiam ex solo huius virtutis motivo positus, qui charitate formatus non sit: formatus, inquam, sin minus *in actu signato*, ratione specialis et expressae intentionis vel *actualis* vel *virtualis*, at saltem *in actu exercito*, ratione influxus in imperio quem ex parte *charitatis* secum fert ipsum simplex et nudum cuiusvis boni operis exercitium modo supra explicato.

All that is necessary is the state of grace, a morally good act, and any honest motive. Given such requisites, the habit of charity, since it perfects the will towards commanding, necessarily refers all our acts to the ultimate end, even though that end be not adverted to, nor intended.

Although he does not refer to him, Billot's view bears a marked resemblance to that of Francis Sylvius.⁴⁹ Among modern Moralists, Vermeersch adheres fully to Billot's opinion.⁵⁰

3. The Opinion of Suarez

A type of reference to the end sometimes called a virtual reference of charity is that which does not take its rise from a preceding act of charity, but from the necessary connection between some virtue and the virtue of charity; it consists in the natural inclination of the act of any virtue which is from charity to the very end of charity. This connatural tendency, Suarez likens to the manner in which natural things are said to "*intendere assimilationem Dei*" in their actions. Such a reference of charity he terms innate or quasi connatural.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Sylvius, F., *Commentarii in Totam Primam Secundae S. Thomas Aquinatis*, q. 114, a. 4, q. 2, Concl. 11, pp. 633-634: Illa omnia hominis justi opera sunt vitae aeternae meritoria, quae actu vel virtute sunt ex imperio charitatis, sive fit actus virtutis infusae, sive acquisitae. . . . Idcirco addendum videtur, illum imperium charitatis, . . . non esse aliud quam actum voluntatis, quo ipsa per charitatem informata, et a Deo per gratiam mota illos imperat actus, ipsos ordinando in finem charitatis, hoc est in honorem et gloriam Dei . . . Omnia ejusmodi opera fiunt voluntarie ac libere; ergo voluntas ea vel elicit vel aliquo modo imperat saltem tacite: atqui voluntas cum de homine justificato loquamur est charitate informata et cum ista opera fiant per auxilium gratiae actualis eadem voluntas movetur a Deo per gratiam ut velit; nec dubium esse videtur, quin ea velit in ordine ad suum finem, qui est Deus ut gratiae salutisque nostrae Auctor: ergo fiunt ex aliquo imperio sicut voluntatis et charitatis. If one discounts the need of actual grace upon which Sylvius insists, this opinion seems quite in accord with that proposed by Billot.

⁵⁰ Vermeersch, A., *Theologiae Moralis*, I, n. 128, pp. 132-136.

⁵¹ Suarez, F., *Opera Omnia*, X, lib. 12, (De Merito) c. 9, n. 1, p. 48: Ac denique addimus quintum membrum relationis, quam vocare etiam solent virtualem, nos autem . . . innatam, vel quasi connaturalem actui vocavimus. Et in praesenti est illa quae non nascitur ex praecedenti actu, sed ex

But since this reference does not come from some preceding *act* of charity in any way, it must come from the very *habit* of charity. To say that it arises from the necessary connection of the virtues with charity, and hence is connatural to the acts of the virtues, is merely to specify the effect derived from the habit of charity; it does not modify the reference of charity. Hence, it would appear that the so-called innate or quasi connatural reference of charity, is essentially the same thing as the habitual reference of charity.

In presenting his view as to the conditions requisite for a meritorious act, Suarez sedulously distinguished between the infused virtues and the acquired virtues.

He maintains that the acts of the infused virtues made by a man in the state of grace are meritorious *de condigno* by the force of their own goodness, or connatural tendency or reference to the end, without any other, as it were, extrinsic reference coming to them from a past or present act of charity being necessary.⁵²

To support this view, he argues as follows. The acts of the infused virtues are good, with an intrinsic, supernatural goodness. Therefore from their very nature they must come from God as from the first supernatural agent moving man through the help of a preventer grace, which, *de facto*, is always given. Hence, they require no other reference than the innate or quasi connatural reference of charity in order that they be meritorious of eternal life.⁵³

necessaria connexione inter aliquam virtutem cum virtute charitatis, et consistit in naturali inclinazione seu pondere alicujus actus alterius virtutis a charitate in finem ipsius charitatis. Ad eum modum res naturales dicuntur in suis actionibus intendere assimilationem Dei.

⁵² *Op. cit. loc. cit. n. 4, p. 49:* Dico ergo actus virtutum infusarum factos ab homine grato, esse meritorios de condigno supernaturalis beatitudinis, ex vi suae bonitatis et connaturalis ponderis seu relationis in illum finem, absque alia relatione, quasi extrinseca, quae per actum charitatis praeteritum vel praesentem illis adveniat.

⁵³ *Ibid. . . .* nam isti actus sunt intrinsece boni bonitate supernaturali, sunt enim quoad substantiam supernaturales; ergo ex intrinseca natura sua habent ut procedant a Deo, tanquam a primo agente supernaturali, et movente hominem per actuale auxilium gratiae praevenientis, quod auxilium

He attempts to prove his conclusion through an analogy with the natural order. All things which come from God tend to him as to their ultimate end through an inclination which arises from their very nature. If this be true in the natural order, it should be true likewise in the supernatural order. Hence the infused virtues which come from God as from the author of the supernatural order, are ordained to Him as to their supernatural end by an intrinsic and natural ordination, for the ultimate end is always proportioned to the first principle. Again, just as the natural intellect *per se* tends to God as to its natural end, because it proceeds from Him as from its first natural cause, so grace by its nature tends to God the supernatural end. The same thing must be said of the infused virtues. For although they do not all immediately attain God as their object, nevertheless, they all tend to Him as to their supernatural end; for they are proportioned to grace from which they flow, and therefore tend to the same end, just as the potencies of the soul have the same natural end as the soul itself. Now the soul through its substance only remotely tends to the end, proximately through the potencies. So too, proportionately, the infused virtues are compared to grace with respect to the ultimate end; therefore the acts of such virtues *per se* and from their very nature are referred to the same end.⁵⁴

de facto per Christum datur, quae omnia in superioribus ostensa sunt; ergo nullam aliam relationem requirunt, ut sint meritorii de condigno in persona grata.

⁵⁴ *Op. cit., loc. cit., n. 5, p. 49:* . . . omnia quae procedunt a Deo, ad eumdem redeunt, tanquam ad ultimum finem, naturali pondere et inclinazione naturae; ergo quae procedunt a Deo, ut auctore supernaturali, ordinantur ad ipsum, ut supernaturalem finem, intrinseca et naturali ordinatione, nam ultimus finis semper proportionatur primo principio. Unde in superioribus dicebamus quod, sicut natura intellectualis per se tendit in Deum, ut naturalem finem, quia ab illo ut prima causa naturali procedit, ita gratia sanctificans natura sua tendit in Deum finem supernaturalem . . . Idemque dicendum est de ipsis virtutibus infusis; nam, licet non omnes immediate Deum attingant tanquam objectum, nihilominus omnes in eum tendunt ut supernaturalem finem; nam proportionantur gratiae, a qua suo modo diminant, et ideo in eumdem finem tendunt, sicut etiam potentiae animae eumdem habent naturalem finem ultimum cum ipsa anima. Imo anima per substantiam suam quasi remote, proxime vero per potentias suas in illum finem tendit. Simili ergo proportione virtutes

Further, Suarez maintains, the opinions which require some previous act of charity in order that subsequent acts of virtue may be meritorious are without foundation in Sacred Scripture and hence the reference of charity they require is not demanded by God; secondly, such a reference is not necessary from the very nature of things as is evident from the Council of Trent.⁵⁵ In appealing to Scripture and to Trent, Suarez adduces substantially the same testimony and the same type of argument as did Vasquez; hence, we will not elaborate his arguments here.⁵⁶ However, this author does add that nothing can be proven from the fact that the Council in its sixth session, the sixteenth chapter⁵⁷ when it says that our works are meritorious, modifies the statement by the phrase *quae in Deo sunt facta*, for these words are very general. That our works be done in God, it is sufficient that they be done in grace and from grace (*in gratia et ex gratia*), that God premove and help in the work, and that by their nature they tend to God and to his glory.⁵⁸

It would seem that the teaching of Vasquez and Suarez con-

infusae ad gratiam comparantur respectu supernaturalis finis ultimi; ergo et actus talium virtutum per se et ex intrinseca ratione sua in eundem finem referuntur.

⁵⁵ *Op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, n. 6, p. 49: . . . altera relatio sine fundamento postulatur, quia neque ex divina ordinatione speciali postulatur, neque ex natura rei ostendi potest necessaria . . . Prior pars probatur primo, quia ex nullo loco Scripturae ostenditur . . . Secundo, probatur ex Concilio Tridentino.

⁵⁶ *Op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, n. 6, pp. 49, 50.

⁵⁷ DBU, 809: Cum enim ille ipse Christus Iesus tanquam *caput in membra* et tanquam *vitis in palmites* in ipsos iustificatos iugiter virtutem influat, quae virtus bona eorum opera semper antecedit, comitatur et subsequitur, et sine qua nullo pacto Deo grata et meritoria esse possent; nihil ipsis iustificatis amplius deesse credendum est, quominus plene illis quidem operibus, quae in Deo sunt facta, divinae legi pro huius vitae statu satisfecisse, et vitam aeternam suo etiam tempore (si tamen in *gratia* decesserint) consequendam vere promeruisse censeantur . . .

⁵⁸ Suarez, *op. cit.*, n. 6, p. 50: Dices Concilium indicare illam relationem in verbis illis: *Quae in Deo sunt facta*. Sed hoc gratis dicitur, quia illa verba generaliora sunt. Satis enim *in Deo fit*, quod *in gratia et ex gratia fit*, et ad quod Deus specialiter promovet et adjuvat, et quod *natura sua in Deum tendit, et in gloriam ejus cedit*.

cerning the reference of charity required that the acts of infused virtues be condignly meritorious is substantially the same. Suarez uses slightly different terminology and is more specific in assigning the manner in which the habit of charity refers the acts of the infused virtues to the end. If there be any real difference in their opinions, it seems to be this. According to Vasquez, the habit of charity appears to be necessary for merit only by concomitance; according to Suarez, the habit of charity is necessary because antecedently to any act of charity, it bestows effectively upon the infused virtues a connatural reference to the ultimate end.

As regards the reference of charity required that the acts of the acquired virtues may be meritorious, Suarez rejects the opinion of Vasquez which maintains that it is sufficient if these works be done by a man in the state of grace, under the influence of an actual grace. For, Suarez argues, if such acts are not performed from some supernatural motive and *imperium*, but only from some natural honesty, they could be done without the aid of actual grace, and hence could not be meritorious at all, for an actual grace, as Trent teaches (and Vasquez admits) is required for a meritorious act.⁵⁹

Further, it is contained in the very notion of merit that the work be done *ex fide*. Suarez appeals to St. Paul's statement in Galatians: *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision is of any avail, nor uncircumcision, but faith which works through charity.*⁶⁰ He refers also to the first epistle to the Corinthians: *And if I . . . do not have charity, it profits me nothing.*⁶¹ From these statements we may rightly conclude, he says, that any work done without charity is of no avail; so too, since Paul says that nothing is of any avail in Christ unless faith operates, we may legitimately conclude that any work of virtue not done from faith is not

⁵⁹ *Op. cit.*, c. 10, n. 15, p. 57: . . . ut hujusmodi actus morales sint meritorii, non satis est quod fiant ab homine grato, si non fiant ex aliquo motivo et imperio supernaturali. Probatur, quia, si aliter fiat tale opus, scilicet, ex pura ratione et honestate naturali, sine actuali influxu gratiae fieri potest; ergo id non satis est ut sit meritorious de condigno.

⁶⁰ Galatians 5, 6.

⁶¹ I Cor. 13, 3.

condignly meritorious in the sight of God. More specifically, not even the informed habit of faith is sufficient of itself; but faith must operate, that is, some act of faith must have preceded the present act, and the present act must be done from a motive furnished by faith.⁶²

Therefore an act of an acquired virtue should be done because of some supernatural end or motive in order that it be meritorious *de condigno*. Positing such a motive, as well as habitual grace, and actual grace which, *de facto*, is given, then the acts of the acquired virtues are truly meritorious. Faith itself is required for the meritorious operation of the will only in so far as it proposes to it an object which is in some way supernatural and thus proportioned to the supernatural operation of the will. Therefore faith is required to preserve the proportion between merit and reward. Faith elevates the faculty of the intellect to the supernatural order; charity has already perfected the will; and the soul is perfected by grace. Given an actual grace, nothing is lacking that the acts of acquired virtues be meritorious.⁶³

Further, this view is confirmed by a comparison with the acts of the infused moral virtues. Just as the infused moral virtues do not need any extrinsic reference for merit, neither do the acts

⁶² Suarez, *op. cit.*, c. 10, n. 16, p. 58: *Sicut enim ex eo quod Apostolus dixit, 1 ad Corinthios 13, loquens de quocumque opere virtutis: Si charitatem non habeam, nihil mihi prodest, recte colligimus nullum opus, quantumvis aliunde bonum, sine charitate factum, esse meritorium de condigno, ita quia Paulus dicit in Christo nihil valere, nisi quod fides operatur, recte colligimus, omne opus virtutis, non factum ex fide, non esse meritorium de condigno apud Deum. Imo inde etiam colligimus non satis esse habere fidem, etiam vivam nisi fides ipsa operetur; nam Paulus de fide operante aperte loquitur.*

⁶³ *Op. cit.*, n. 19, pp. 58-59: . . . actum virtutis acquisitae debere fieri propter aliquem supernaturalem finem, seu ex motivo aliquo supernaturali, ut possit esse meritorius de condigno; quod si homo justus ita operetur, id satis erit ut per talem actum de condigno mereatur . . . neque alia ratione requiritur fides ad operationem meritoriam voluntatis, nisi ut proponat ei objectum aliquo modo supernaturali, et modo consentaneo ad supernaturaliter operandum . . . Unde D. Thomas in 2 dist. 27, quaest. 1, art. 3, recte dixit meritum et praemium hanc proportionem servare debere, ut saltem sint eujusdem ordinis, ita ut si praemium excedit facultatem naturae, ita etiam et meritum.

of the acquired moral virtues done from some supernatural end, for by that very fact they are virtually ordained to the ultimate end; not by some virtual reference arising from a previously elicited act of the will, but by the reference included in that very act which looks to the supernatural motive. Therefore, there is in such an act a sufficient proportion to merit, similar to that found in the act of the infused virtue.⁶⁴

According to Suarez, therefore, the following conditions are required in order that the acts of the acquired virtues may be meritorious. The state of grace, an actual grace, a good work, and some supernatural motive supplied by faith. A virtual intention and reference of this supernatural motive drawn from faith appears to be sufficient.

We have found but one author who seems to agree with Suarez in making the distinction between the requisites for the meritorious act of the infused virtues, and those demanded by the meritorious act of the acquired virtues. He is John Malderus.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ *Op. cit., loc. cit.*, p. 59: Secundo, probari potest assertio testimoniis et rationibus, quibus capite praecedenti probavimus actus morales per se infusos non indigere alia relatione extrinseca ad meritum, nam eadem applicari possunt ad actus virtutum moralium acquisitarum factos ex aliquo supernaturali fine, quia eo ipso virtualiter ordinantur ad finem ultimum supernaturalem, non quidem relatione virtuali proveniente ex alio priori actu voluntatis elicito, sed relatione inclusa illomet actu respiciente motivum supernaturale; ergo est in tali actu sufficiens proportio ad meritum, similis illi quae in actu infuso invenitur.

⁶⁵ *Joannis Malderi In Primam Secundae D. Thomas Commentaria*, q. 114, a. 2, dub. 8, p. 610: Probabile est, actus virtutum infusarum, tam Theologicarum quam moralium, in iustificato esse meritorios substantialis praemii, hoc est vitae aeternae, et augmenti gratiae et charitatis, etiamsi non procedant ex actuali imperio charitatis reipsa concurrente, aut ita procedente ut virtute eius fiant . . . Probabile est D. Thomam non voluisse ad meritum opus esse actuali aut virtuali charitatis imperio in operibus virtutum infusarum . . . sed solum ita locutum esse, quod actiones meritoriae vel sint actu distinto a charitate imperatae . . . vel saltem interpretativum habeant charitatis imperium quod consistat vel in eo, quod natura sua eiusmodi actiones procedant ex radice charitatis, aut tendant in finem charitatis, vel in eo quod includant virtualem aliquam dilectionem charitatis . . . vel in eo, quod virtutes unde procedunt sint informatae charitate; vel in eo quod charitas consideretur quasi voluntas in ordine

hoc supernaturali, ut sicuti in naturalibus meritorium opus non censeantur, nisi procedat a charitate, quae natura sua est reliquarum virtutum imperatrix. Procedat inquam, mediante saltem aliqua virtute infusa . . .

Op. cit., loc. cit., p. 611: . . . existimo quod fiunt meritorii vitae aeternae actus virtutum moralium acquisitarum, quando saltem fiunt per gratiam ex motivo aliquo supernaturali.

Despite the difference in terminology, it may well be that John Wiggers also agrees with Suarez's view. Cf. *Commentaria in Primam Secundae Divi Thomae*, IV, q. 114, a. 4, n. 58: Dico Tertio idem etiam de actibus virtutum supernaturalium, seu infusarum ut fidei, spei, . . . quod vitae aeternae meritorii sint quando a charitate imperantur. In explaining what he means by the command of charity, this author makes the following statement. *Op. cit., loc. cit.*, n. 59, p. 537: Maxime probabile est, quod hi actus in iustificato sint meritorii vitae aeternae, etsi non a formalis imperio charitatis actu, aut virtute adhuc durante, procedant, v.g. quod credere articulos fidei, quia a Deo revelati sint: sperare et desiderare divinae essentiae fruitionem tanquam bonum supernaturale nobis ut finem propositum; colere Deum hostiis et sacrificiis et gratiarum actionibus sunt actus meritorii vitae aeternae, etsi neque de facto sit, nec antecesserit actus charitatis cuius virtute isti exerceantur tanquam a charitate imperati; sed fiant tantum ex virtutibus supernaturalibus ipsis correspondentibus, et ex Spiritu Sancti gratia a iustificatis propter eorum honestatem et beatitudinem quae est ordinis supernaturalis. *Op. cit., loc. cit.*, n. 63, p. 538: Et ut similiter dicantur isti actus debere imperari a charitate, non quidem per formalem et expressum actum charitatis, cuius virtute moveantur alii habitus ad operandum; sed saltem per aliquod imperium implicitum et interpretativum, quod non necessario in actu aliquo, sed in habitu potest intelligi consistere. Quandoquidem enim charitas per se directe ac proxime in Deum ut finem supernaturalem tendit et inclinat, ipsaque voluntatem Reginam et Imperatricem aliarum potentiarum informet, et in eundem finem habitualiter semper moveat, hinc etiam aliarum virtutum supernaturalium actiones quae in imperio voluntatis fiunt, censentur dirigi in finem ipsius charitatis; ad quae virtutes illae ex se quoque sunt ordinatae, cum sint vel dispositiones ad charitatem, vel quasi connaturales eius proprietates; et sic actus earum modo quodam dicuntur a charitate imperari, implicite scilicet et interpretative, sicut explicatum . . . Videtur itaque requirere tantum ut aliae virtutes habeant charitatem sociam, ut actus sint utiles et meritorii; non autem quod semper debeant a formalis et expresso charitatis imperio moveri ad operandum.

Op. cit., loc. cit., n. 66, p. 538: Probabiliter dici potest actus moraliter bonos non tantum reddi meritorios, si imperentur a charitate, sed etiam quando in iustificatis, imperantur ab aliis virtutibus infusis, v.g., a Fide, a Religione, aut similibus. Fundamentum hujus esse potest quia ad meritationem ex parte ipsius actus satis est, quod referatur ad finem ipsius charitatis, quod potest fieri per virtutem charitatis subservientes, et famulantes.

4. The Opinion of Mazzella

Mazzella himself clearly indicates that he is following the teaching of Suarez. Taken broadly this statement is true, but there are points of difference. Like Suarez, he distinguishes between the habitual reference of charity, and the innate or connatural reference.⁶⁶ Further, like Suarez, Mazzella claims that the innate or connatural reference requires that acts be elicited either actually or virtually from some supernatural motive.⁶⁷ But unlike Suarez, he nowhere makes the distinction between the acts of the infused virtues and the acts of the acquired virtues. In his opinion, in order that they may be meritorious, the *acts of both types of virtues* must be elicited either actually or virtually from some supernatural motive.⁶⁸ Save for this point of difference, Mazzella seems to be in perfect agreement with Suarez.

5. The Fifth Opinion

This opinion seems to be a combination of that advanced by Vasquez and Mazzella. The following authors do not speak of the innate or connatural reference of charity which, as we have seen, seems to demand an effective participation in the perfection of charity antecedently to the act of charity. With Vasquez they seem disposed to agree that the habit of charity of itself is sufficient. But with Mazzella, against Vasquez, they require that the work be done from some supernatural motive. The difference is indeed slight and is perhaps, more nominal than real. For the authors who embrace this opinion the following conditions seem requisite for a meritorious act: the mere presence of the habit of charity, an actual grace, a morally good work, and some supernatural motive. Among others the following authors

⁶⁶ Mazella, Camillus, *De Virtutibus Infusis*, n. 1341, pp. 758, 759.

⁶⁷ *Op. cit.*, n. 1352, p. 766: Constat inter Catholicos, opera meritoria vitae aeternae debere esse supernaturalia; atqui opera quae non eliciuntur ex aliquo motivo supernaturali actualiter vel virtualiter, etiamsi eliciantur ab hormine justo, non sunt supernaturalia; ergo.

⁶⁸ *Op. cit.*, nn. 1351sq, pp. 765sq.

subscribe to this view: Aegidius De Coninck Bellanus,⁶⁹ Lehmkuhl,⁷⁰ Ferreres,⁷¹ Perrone,⁷² Pesch,⁷³ John McCarthy.⁷⁴

B. The Second View

As we have seen, the various opinions we have quoted had this in common: none of them required some previous elicited act of charity in order that subsequent acts of virtue might be meritorious. The opinions that follow will have this much in common: they all demand at least that some one act of charity shall have preceded subsequent acts of virtue in order that they may be meritorious.

1. The Actual Reference of Charity

No modern author maintains that an actual intention and actual reference of charity is requisite for a meritorious act. It is doubtful if any earlier writers certainly held this view. Some thought that Richard of Mediavella proposed it, but Scotus and others deny it.⁷⁵ Mazzella attributes this teaching to Bannez, but the Salmanticenses think he may be interpreted in a more accept-

⁶⁹ *De Actibus Supernaturalibus in Genere*, Disp. 8, dub. 4, concl. V, p. 138: Ut opus fit meritorium vitae aeternae, non requiritur ut eliciatur aut imperetur a caritate, ita cum Vasquez . . . et Suarez. *Op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, concl. VI, p. 138: Probabilis est ut opus aliquod fit meritorium vitae aeternae, id debere aliquo modo referri in Deum saltem indirecte, quatenus fit ex fine spectante ad fidem, spem, charitatem, religionem, aut statum hominis Christiani.

⁷⁰ *Theologia Moralis*, I, n. 258, p. 164: . . . requiritur praevia motio excitantis gratiae, ex parte hominis requiritur consensus in gratiam datam et oblatam, atque operatio ex motivo aliquo supernaturali.

⁷¹ *Compendium Theologie Moralis*, I, n. 89, qq. 6, 8.

⁷² *Praelectiones Theologicae*, III, c. 4, n. 663, p. 754.

⁷³ *Praelectiones Dogmaticae*, V, nn. 397sq., pp. 217sq.

⁷⁴ "The Supernatural Order," *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 50(1937)247-270.

⁷⁵ Cf. Scotus, *In II Sent.* dist. 41, q. 1. Biel, *In II Sent.* dist. 41, a. 3, dub. 2. Durandus, *In II Sent.* dist. 41, q. 1, n. 7.

able manner.⁷⁶ Suarez⁷⁷ feels that this may possibly be the opinion of Durandus. We shall not concern ourselves with this question, however, for it has no importance in our own time, and it is commonly admitted that such is not the teaching of St. Thomas. One may well wonder, in fact, if such an opinion does not fall into the error of Paschasius Quesnel.⁷⁸

2. The Virtual Reference of Charity

Many indeed are the authors who hold that at least a virtual reference of charity is necessary in order that our acts may be meritorious. But they are not at all agreed as to what constitutes such a virtual reference. We shall attempt now to indicate some divergences in opinion.

a. The Opinion of the Salmanticenses

Maintaining that a man justified by attrition and the Sacrament of Penance can elicit meritorious acts even before he elicits an act of charity, the Salmanticenses teach that *per se* a formal act of charity must precede the virtual reference of charity in order that subsequent acts be meritorious, but *per accidens*, such a prevenient formal act of charity is not necessary, for it can be supplied by the Sacrament of Penance, or even without the Sacrament immediately by God.⁷⁹ Although he does not discuss the

⁷⁶ Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, tr. 16 (De Merito) disp. 4, dub. 5, n. 74, p. 756.

⁷⁷ Suarez, *op. cit.*, X, lib. 12 (De Merito) c. 9, n. 3, p. 49.

⁷⁸ DBU, 1405: Deus non coronat nisi caritatem: qui currit ex alio impulsu et ex alio motivo, in vanum currit.

⁷⁹ *Op. cit.*, X, tr. 16 (De Merito) disp. 4, dub. 6, n. 124, p. 778: . . . nam etsi relatio virtualis alicujus actus ad finem charitatis, per se loquendo, supponat relationem formalem ad eundem finem; per accidens tamen potest illam non supponere, supplente Deo virtute Sacramenti (aut si vellet, etiam sine Sacramento) quidquid praestaret effective, aut dispositive formalis relatio, quae praecessisset.

case of the man justified by the Sacrament of Penance, Ferland,⁸⁰ if we may judge by the terminology he employs, seems to follow the view advocated by the Salmanticenses.

b. The Opinion of St. Bonaventure

The Seraphic Doctor is quite clear in saying that to require an actual reference of all our works to God is to ask too much. On the other hand, a universal reference of charity (the reference of charity following a single act of charity whereby we refer all subsequent acts to God) is too easy, and seems to go against the sayings of the saints.⁸¹

As we saw, he himself taught the possibility of acts indifferent to merit by a just man.⁸² A deliberate act would be indifferent to merit when it was not referred to God either because of our weakness or our misery. For such an action we received neither praise nor blame, neither merit nor demerit.⁸³

As regards those actions which we do refer to God in order that we may merit, it is sufficient that we refer them to the ultimate end habitually (virtual reference of charity in our terminology). By the habitual reference of charity he means that the actual ordination to the end effected through a formal act of charity made in the beginning of a series of actions purdures throughout that same series of actions, even though one does not actually think of God after having made the act of charity. He gives the example of a man who intends to give away a number of pieces of money, and who in giving the first piece thinks of God, but does not think of Him when he gives away the remainder

⁸⁰ Ferland, A., *Commentarius in Summam D. Thomae (De Gratia)* c. 2, sect. 2, disp. 2, a. 3, n. 3, p. 327: Ergo, juxta naturam ipsius charitatis et per se loquendo, ab unico actu formali huiusce virtutis *virtualiter subinde* in Deum praemiantem diriguntur omnes actus virtutum, etiam acquisitarum. Ex unica igitur intentione actuali *sufficiens* habetur influxus virtualis charitatis, ad meritum de condigno postulatus.

⁸¹ In II Sent. dist. 41, a. 1, q. 3, concl., p. 944.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

of the sum. Despite this fact, the giving of the rest of the money will be truly meritorious.⁸⁴ Another example is that of a religious who in the beginning of his religious life gives himself and his work to God. All the subsequent acts which fall under his life as a religious will be meritorious, even though at the time of their performance, he does not think of God.⁸⁵

St. Bonaventure seems therefore to limit the causal effectiveness of the virtual reference of charity not to any specified amount of time, but rather by the *sameness in the species of acts*. This interpretation is borne out by the following statement. After telling us that the works of a religious can be meritorious after a single ordination in the beginning of his religious life, he qualifies his statement by saying that if he should perform some action which is *extra religionem*, he must elicit a new act of charity in order that such a work may be meritorious.⁸⁶

For Bonaventure then, a virtual reference of charity which presupposes a formal act of charity, is required for a meritorious act. This virtual reference following a single act of charity is sufficient and effective in ordaining subsequent acts to the ultimate end as long as these acts fall under the same species as the first act ordained to God. But when an act of a different species is begun, another elicited act of charity is required that it may be meritorious.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, ad 6, p. 946: Notandum est tamen, quod ad hoc, quod aliqua actio sit meritoria, non oportet, quod semper quis eam referat *actualiter* in Deum, sed sufficit relatio *habitualis*. Habituellem autem relationem voco, non quia habeat caritatem, per quam sit habilis ad referendum; sed quia in primordio operationis illius vel alterius ad quam illa consequenter se habet, intentionem habet ad Deum directam. Unde si aliquis intendit dare pro Deo centum marcas et incipit dare et cogitat de Deo in prima marca, et in aliis non cogitat; nihilominus tamen omnes dationes illae sunt ei meritoriae et fructuosae.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*: ad 6, p. 946: Si autem opus alterius generis inciperet, oporteret, quod intentio renovaretur ad hoc, quod opus esset meritorious.

Laymann,⁸⁷ Sporer,⁸⁸ Bellarmine,⁸⁹ Gotti⁹⁰ and St. Alphonsus⁹¹ are in substantial agreement with St. Bonaventure in that they require, for one reason or another, the repetition of the formal act of charity. Thus St. Alphonsus says that in practice a virtual reference of charity requires that at *least each morning, one offer all his actions to God.*⁹² Laymann is somewhat stricter. He says it is not enough if in the morning we offer all subsequent actions to God from the motive of charity; this motive of charity must be truly the cause of any subsequent action that follows. Even after making such an offering in the morning, it is quite possible to perform some action from a merely human motive, as to obey our parents lest we be punished. The following practical sign will help to determine if charity is really the cause of our actions, performed after the morning offering. If we would have performed a certain action even though we had not made the general offering in the morning, then such an action does not come from charity and is not meritorious. If we would not have performed some action had we not made the general offering in the morning, then such an action is truly the effect of charity and is meritorious.⁹³

⁸⁷ Laymann, P., *Theologia Moralis*, tr. III, c. 1, n. 5, Corrol. II, p. 224.

⁸⁸ Sporer, P., *Theologiae Moralis Super Decalogum* I, tr. II, c. 5, n. 16, p. 210.

⁸⁹ Bellarmine, R., *Opera Omnia* IV, (De Gratia), III Gen. Cont., I Princ., lib. 1, c. 6.

⁹⁰ Gotti, V. L., *Theologia Scholastica Dogmatica*, II, tr. 7, q. 2, dub. 4, nn. 14sq., pp. 320, 321.

⁹¹ De Ligorio, St. Alphonsus, *Theologia Moralis*, II, lib. 5, n. 44, p. 17.

⁹² *Ibid*: Hinc pro praxi colligimus: oportet *saepius in die, saltem mane*, offerre Deo omnes actus suos, ut sic adimpleatur praeceptum apostoli, saltem intentione virtuali omnia faciendi in gloriam Dei. Hoc modo omnis actus etiam indifferens in specie fit bonus et virtuosus in individuo.

⁹³ Laymann, P., *op. cit.*, lib. 2, tr. 3, c. 1, n. 5, Coroll. II, p. 224: Non sufficit homini iusto ad promerendum singulis actionibus bonis augmentum gratiae, ac gloriae aeternae, quod principio anni, mensis, hebdomadis, diei, v.g. mane postquam e lecto surrexit, totum se Deo ex charitate offerat, cum proposito omnia ad ipsius gloriam operandi; sed necesse est, ut propositum hoc efficax fit, id est, vere causa operum subsequentium existat. Tametsi enim homo principio diei omnia agere proponat ob amorem Dei; fieri tamen solet, ut postea multa agat non vi eius propositi:

Sporer appeals to the authority of Laymann and St. Bonaventure, but his opinion is actually more nearly akin to that of St. Alphonsus. He says we refer an action to God from virtual charity when by force of a previous intention and command of charity, once made and never revoked, we perform some action of which charity is really the cause.⁹⁴ Thus if in the morning we offer all our actions to God from the motive of charity, and during the day we perform an act of which this morning offering is the cause, such an act is certainly meritorious. A practical sign of this is the following. If one is asked why he is praying, or writing, or studying, etc., and he immediately answers: "for the glory of God", such an action proceeds from the virtual intention and *imperium* of charity and is truly meritorious.⁹⁵ However, if one is in no way mindful of the morning's intention, and performs some action merely out of custom, then the action will not be

sed ex motivo mere humano, aut etiam moralis solum honestatis; ut si parentibus obtemperet, ne ab illis verberetur: vel quia id secundum morum honestatem decens est. Signum autem erit, tales actiones non provenire ex motivo et proposito Charitatis antecedente si facto hypothesi, quod tale propositum non antecesserit, nihilominus actiones illae eodem modo exercitiae fuissent, quia aliud sufficiens agendi motivum habuerunt, uti dixi. Sin vero propositum operandi propter Deum quamvis aliquo modo generale, vere causa existat subsequentium operum, adeo quidem, ut absque praecedente Charitatis intentione exercita non fuissent: tum recte dicitur, ea ex praevia motione et imperio Charitatis, virtualiter adhuc manente, provenire, ideoque in homine iusto meritoria esse vitae aeternae.

⁹⁴ Sporer, P., *op. cit.*, I, tr. 2, c. 5, n. VI, p. 210: Virtute, seu virtualiter actiones nostras in Deum ultimum Finem referimus, quando vi intentionis et imperii Charitatis praecedentis nunquam revocatae, postea data occasione operamur: ita nimur, ut imperium Charitatis, seu intentio praecedens vere sit causa actionis subsequentis; et haec vere fiat ex vi et motione intentionis praecedentis adhuc virtute perseverantis; . . .

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*: . . . cuius signum a posteriori est, si te reflectens, vel interrogatus, cur *opereris hoc, ores, studeas, scribas . . .* statim recitata priori intentione dices: *propter Deum, ad Dei Gloriam, ad Dei placitum*. Quod si ergo quis mane v.g., proponat hoc die, haec, illa, ac omnia opera sua facere ex Charitate, et propter Deum ad ejus Gloriam, is quidem ipso facto exercet actum praestantissimum Charitatis, et Religionis.

meritorious,⁹⁶ for the virtual intention and reference of charity perdures only so long as one is conscious, however tenuously, of the fact that he is working for God.⁹⁷

Gotti holds that it is more probable and safer to maintain that acts are not thought to proceed virtually from charity by reason of some remote intention of charity (one made in the beginning of one's life, or at the moment of justification), but that the virtual reference of charity requires that the first act following the act of charity should in some way be immediately connected with that act of charity, and the subsequent acts of virtue should be immediately connected with the first act following the act of charity.⁹⁸ This opinion, as is evident, has much in common with the teaching of Bonaventure.

Billuart seems to require not only the initial formal act of charity, but that the formal act be repeated as often as the precept of charity obliges in order that all actions may be meritorious by reason of the virtual influx of charity.⁹⁹

c. The Opinion of Van Noort

Van Noort requires that by some elicited act of charity we ordain ourselves and our works to God in order that subsequent acts of virtue be meritorious. Such an act, once made, is sufficient that all the acts that follow merit eternal life. But to his

⁹⁶ *Ibid*: . . . at vero postea temporibus suis prorsus immemor matutini propositi sui, et absque ulla omnino relatione, vel dependentia ad illud propositum, ut nec interrogatus quidem, cur modo operetur, scribat, . . . illius meminisset; sed mere ob alias causes, v.g., ex metu servili poenae, ex mera consuetudine, . . . oret, studeat . . . , tunc illae actiones, sicut revera non sunt amplius actus Charitatis imperati, neque vi illius propositi facti, ita neque vi illius meritoriae esse poterunt.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*: Et certe tamdiu durabit tua virtualis intentio, et relatio Charitatis ad Deum, quamdiu in operando sentis aliquam quantumvis tenuem reflexionem, vel motum ad Deum.

⁹⁸ Gotti, V. L., *op. cit.*, II, tr. 7, q. 2, dub. 4, n. 19, p. 321: . . . sed requiri ut aliquam connexionem mediatam vel immediatam cum primo illo actu charitatis habeant; ita ut primus actus sequens immediate cum actu charitatis connectatur ac caeteri inter se.

⁹⁹ Billuart, *Summa S. Thome*, III (Tr. De Gratia) Dissert. 7, a. 4, pp. 198sq.

mind, it is too much to demand that these subsequent acts be always elicited from either the actual or the virtual *imperium* of charity. Once a man has ordained himself, and all his actions to God, and repeats this act of charity as often as the precept obliges, all his morally good acts, even though they no longer proceed from a past act of charity, would seem to be meritorious. The reason for this is that the act of charity and the intention of doing everything for God are, as it were, a donation which perseveres until it is withdrawn. And this donation brings it about that all the acts which can be referred to God, even those which charity does not command, are actually ordained to God.¹⁰⁰

If we understand him correctly, the teaching of Ballerini is much akin to, if not identical with, the view proposed by Van Noort. He teaches the necessity of some formal elicited act of charity in order that subsequent works may be meritorious. For, he says, that act by which subsequent acts are informed and in virtue of which all acts are said to be referred to God is an act of charity by which we constitute God *de facto* our ultimate end.¹⁰¹ In virtue of that first act of charity all works are ordained to God, and the reference to God from charity perdures as long as one retains the habit of charity.¹⁰² Hence, any good work will be virtually referred to God if a man be in the state of grace;¹⁰³ there is no further need of a supernatural motive required for each good work, much less a motive of charity.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Van Noort, G., *De Gratia Christi*, n. 214, p. 199: *Equidem cum defensoribus primae sententiae censeo, nullum opus esse meritorium nisi in virtute actus charitatis, sed nimium videtur, exigere, ut singuli actus eliciantur ex imperio actuali aut saltem virtuali charitatis. Quando homo per actum charitatis se suaque omnia in Deum ordinavit et hunc actum toties repetit, quoties obligat praeceptum charitatis, cuncti ejus actus honesti, etiam ii qui ab actu praeterito charitatis non amplius procedunt, videntur meritorii. Actus charitatis et intentio faciendi omnia propter Deum sunt veluti donatio, quae perseverat quamdiu non retractatur. Efficit igitur ut omnes actus in Deum referibiles, etiam ii in quorum exercitium ipsa non movet, sint ordinati in Deum.*

¹⁰¹ Ballerini, A., *Opus Theologicum Morale*, I, n. 117, p. 110.

¹⁰² *Op. cit.*, p. 111.

¹⁰³ *Op. cit.*, n. 118, p. 112.

¹⁰⁴ *Op. cit.*, n. 119, p. 112. Cf. *Op. cit.*, n. 122, p. 114.

Genicot-Salsmann¹⁰⁵ expressly claims to follow the view preferred by Ballerini.

The singularity in the teaching of Ballerini, Genicot-Salsmann, and Van Noort is that they do require a previously elicited act of charity in order that all subsequent works may be meritorious. But once such an act has been made, nothing more is required than grace and the habit of charity. It is not necessary that each work proceed from the *imperium* of charity.

d. The Opinion of the Dominican Commentators

Most Dominican theologians maintain that a virtual reference of charity is necessary that subsequent acts of virtue may be meritorious. The following is their understanding of the virtual reference of charity. A formal, elicited act of charity whereby we refer ourselves and all that we will do to God must precede any meritorious act. But in virtue of such an act of charity once made, and never retracted, all subsequent acts of virtue performed during our entire lifetime (if we retain the state of grace) will be referred to the ultimate end. These authors put no limit to the causal effectiveness of such a virtual reference of charity either by reason of time, or by reason of species of acts. Further, unlike Van Noort and his followers, they insist that the reference to the ultimate end subsequent to the initial act of charity, always comes from the command of charity, and hence, that every act is elicited from at least a virtual motive of charity.

This, it would seem, is the opinion of Albert the Great,¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Genicot-Salsmans, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, I, tr. 1, c. 5, n. 44, p. 40: *Probabiliter opinamur cum Ballerini . . . ad actum meritorium sufficere ut aliquis se semel, per actum non retractatum caritatis, in Deum ordinaverit* (intentio habitualis ex fide), *singulas vero actiones in finem operis proximum referat actualiter vel virtualiter*.

¹⁰⁶ B. Alberti Magni, *Opera Omnia* XXVII, *In II Sent.* dist. 40, a. 4, p. 634: *Sine prejudiciis loquendo non video qualiter secundum dicta Sanctorum possit sustineri aliquid esse indifferens in operibus voluntatis deliberativa: quia aut erit otiosum, et tunc reputatur malum in Evangelio: aut erit relatum, et tunc erit meritorium.*

Cf. *Op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, p. 635: *Ad id quod ulterius queritur, dicendum quod sufficit universalis relatio: sicut verbi gratia, si totum se devovit omnia opera sunt relata in illa relatione, nisi actualiter in aliquo opere*

Capreolus,¹⁰⁷ Cajetan,¹⁰⁸ Medina,¹⁰⁹ John of St. Thomas,¹¹⁰

malo fiat revocatio relationis illius: sicut si dicamus, devovit Deo centum marcas, et per singulas dies dat singulos denarios, non oportet quod omni die referat: quia relatio sufficit nisi revocetur: et est simile in his quae feruntur motu violento, in quibus prima vis motiva non semper conjungitur, sed multiplicatur in medio, et manet.

¹⁰⁷ *Johannis Capreoli Defensiones Theologiae Divi Thomae Aquinatis*, IV, lib. II Sent. dist. 25, q. 1, a. 3, ad 9, p. 244: . . . ad hoc quod actus exterior sit meritorius, non requiritur continua attentio, vel volitio illius actualis nec tamen sufficit habitualis, sed requiritur virtualis.

Cf. *Op. cit.*, lib. II Sent. dist. 40, q. 1, a. 3, p. 459: . . . Nam, in habente charitatem, omnis actus moraliter bonus refertur in Deum, non quidem actualiter, nec solum habitualiter, sed virtualiter; . . . eo modo quod exprimit beatus Thomas in probatione conclusionis: quia scilicet habens charitatem, prius quandoque retulit se et omnia sua actualiter in finem charitatis, nec postea habuit oppositam relationem in contrarium finem; et postea omnia quae virtuose facit propter se vel sua sic in Deum relata, dicuntur virtualiter in Deum relata.

¹⁰⁸ Cajetan, *op. cit.*, In I-II, q. 8, a. 3, n. IV: . . . Vedit enim quod anima nostra tripliciter se habet ad obiecta, scilicet habitualiter, actualiter et virtualiter; et quod inter motum voluntatis in aliquid habitualiter et actualiter, medium est motus voluntatis in illud virtualiter. Et simile est in intellectu. Cum enim habens caritatem peccat venialiter, habitualiter quidem diligit Deum, sed non actualiter, ut patet; nec virtualiter, quia peccatum non est dirigibile in Deum. Cum autem habens caritatem ambulat vel praedicat et quidquid aliud non mali facit, quamvis de Deo non cogitet actualiter, actus tamen ille non solum talis virtutis est, sed caritatis; et voluntas tunc virtualiter fertur in Deum, et non solum habitualiter, quod convenit dormienti et peccanti venialiter. Unfortunately we cannot be absolutely sure of Cajetan's opinion, for it seems to us this text may be interpreted as favoring the opinion of Billot, or even of Vasquez. Cajetan does not, for some reason, comment on the hundred and fourteenth question of the *Prima Secundae*.

¹⁰⁹ Medina, B., *Expositio In Primam Secundae Angelici Doctoris D. Thomas Aquinatis*, q. 114, a. 4, p. 657: Quarto opinio dicit quod non requiritur virtualis relatio quam constituit tertia opinio; sed in hoc sensu quod quando homo primum justificatur apud Deum, referat se, et omnia sua in finem supernaturalem et haec relatio durat per totam vitam, si peccatum mortale non interrupcat. Ex quo statim sequitur quod si homo, vel Angelus habens gratiam nunquam exivit in dilectionem supernaturalem qua se et omnia sua retulit in finem supernaturalem per opera moraliter bona, nihil promereret . . . Haec sententia sic exposita, sine dubio est D. Thomae.

¹¹⁰ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus*, VI, q. 114, disp. 30, a. 1,

Contensen,¹¹¹ Gonet¹¹² and others. This same opinion is also held by more modern authors, not all of whom are Dominicans. It is possible that this is also the opinion of Scotus.¹¹³

* * * *

We have listed most, if not all, of the opinions stating the influx of charity required for merit. Some, if not all of the authors who favor some one opinion, claim that their view is really that of the Angelic Doctor, or at least that their opinion does not contradict his. We shall now present briefly the arguments for the respective interpretations given the teaching of St. Thomas.

n. XXI, p. 918: . . . ergo ab unica intentione possunt omnia illa ordinari, quia habent connexionem cum illa, et sicut longitudo temporis, quod potest consumi in aliquo itinere non impedit virtualem ejus ordinationem in mediis propter connexionem cum fine, ita nec longitudo hujus vitae impedit virtualem charitatis motionem in omnibus ejus operibus. Certe D. Thomas sine ulla restrictione inquit in quaestione secunda de veritate, articulo xi ad secundum: "Quod cum aliquis se ipsum ordinat in Deum in omnibus quae propter ipsum facit, manet virtute intentio ultimi finis, qui Deus est. Unde in omnibus mereri potest si charitatem habeat."

¹¹¹Contenson, V., *Theologia Mentis et Cordis*, II, lb. 7, dissert. 5, c. 2, p. 427: Sufficit ergo et requiritur ordinatio et influxus virtualis, qui virtute praecedentis intentionis perseverat.

¹¹²Gonet, J. B., *Clypeus Thomisticus*, V, tr. 9, disp. II, a. 6, n. CXXXIII, p. 84: Suppono tertio, ad hoc ut actus nostri sint meritorii de condigno vitae aeternae, non requiri necessario actualem charitatis ordinationem seu relationem, sed sufficit virtualem, in virtute actus charitatis praeteriti remanentem.

¹¹³Scotus, *In II Sent. dist. 41, q. 1*, p. 436: . . . non videtur minor relatio relatio sufficere ad meritum quam relatio virtualis . . . Cf. *Op. cit.*, loc. cit., p. 435: Potest autem actus referri ex charitate in finem ultimum tripliciter. Uno modo actualiter, sicut cogitans actualiter de fine diligit illum, et vult aliquid propter illum. Alio modo virtualiter, sicut ex cognitione et dilectione finis deventum est ad volitionem hujus entis ad finem, puta ex cognitione et dilectione Dei pertinente ad portionem superiorem, portio inferior considerat talem actum, puta poenitentiae, esse assumendum, et postea illum exequitur volendo, non tamen tunc referendo in finem, quia nec tunc actualiter cognoscitur nec diligitur.

ARTICLE II

INTERPRETATIONS OF ST. THOMAS' TEACHING

A. The Interpretation of Vasquez

Somewhat hesitantly, Vasquez does appeal to St. Thomas in support of his view. In fact, he admits that St. Thomas does seem to teach that merit belongs essentially to charity. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied, according to this author, that the Angelic Doctor in the *Prima Secundae*, and in the treatise *De Malo*, actually favors the opinion propounded by Vasquez.¹¹⁴ We give here the two texts to which appeal is made.

. . . All that man is, and all that he can [do] and has, must be ordered to God; therefore every good or bad act of man has the *ratio* of merit in the sight of God, in so far as it [merit] pertains to the very *ratio* of the act.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Vasquez, *Commentariorum ac Disputationum In Primam Secundae Sancti Thomae*, II, Dist. 217, c. 2, n. 10, p. 587: *Videtur autem fuisse opinio Beati Thom. supra in ea I-II, q. 21, a. 4 ad ultimum, et q. 2 de Malo, a. 5, ad 7 quamvis in hoc articulo dicat principium merendi magis praecipuum esse charitatem, nihilominus non negat opera aliarum virtutum esse meritoria: imo vero ex aliis etiam virtutibus sumit rationem, et accessionem meriti, et ita in solutione 2 ex ipsa difficultate operis augeri meritum, tametsi mihi satis difficile fit id quod ait 1 p. q. 95, a. 4, nempe totam rationem meriti essentialis esse metiendam ex sola virtute charitatis: caeteris vero virtutibus respondere praemium accidentarium, ex quo videtur reducere totam rationem meriti vitae aeternae, et visionis, ac fruitionis Dei in solum actum charitatis. Fateor etiam, in hoc articulo in solutione tertii maxime in eam sententiam inclinare, ut opus non sit meritorium nisi a charitate procedat, et q. 2 de Virtutibus a. 1, ad 2, plane affirmit, opera aliarum virtutum esse meritoria vitae aeternae ex voluntate, et affectu charitatis, qui praecessit. Haec tamen loca Doctoris sancti ex instituto explicanda sunt in materia de charitate.*

¹¹⁵ I-II, q. 21, a. 4, ad 3: . . . Sed totum quod homo est, et quod potest et habet, ordinandum est ad Deum; et ideo omnis actus hominis bonus vel malus habet rationem meriti vel demeriti apud Deum, quantum est ex ipsa ratione actus. Cf. Vasquez, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

. . . In those who have charity every act is meritorious or demeritorious.¹¹⁶

From these texts Vasquez concludes that while St. Thomas teaches merit belongs more principally to charity, the Angelic Doctor does not deny that the works of other virtues are also meritorious.

B. The Interpretation of Billot

It must be pointed out that Billot himself does not claim St. Thomas as the authority for his view. In fact, he expressly says the opinion advocated by St. Thomas is not completely satisfactory.¹¹⁷ The reason is that St. Thomas nowhere considers the case of a man who, justified by attrition and the Sacrament, elicits acts of some other virtue before eliciting an act of charity.¹¹⁸ According to Billot, St. Thomas regularly supposes that the impious are justified through perfect contrition in virtue of which all subsequent acts have the necessary reference to the end.¹¹⁹ Billot's opinion, therefore, cannot be considered as an interpretation of the doctrine of St. Thomas.

Unlike Billot, whose opinion he follows, Vermeersch¹²⁰ claims the authority of St. Thomas. In particular he appeals to the passage from *De Malo*¹²¹ already quoted, and to a passage in the Angelic Doctor's earliest work where he says that since charity commands the virtues as the will does the potencies, it is necessary that whatever is ordered to the end of some particular virtue

¹¹⁶ *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 7: . . . Sed habentibus caritatem omnis actus est meritorius vel demeritorius. Cf. Vasquez, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

¹¹⁷ Billot, L., *De Gratia Christi*, q. 114, th. 20, p. 244.

¹¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*: Et circa hunc casum nihil expressum reperi apud S. Thomam, qui cum ubique supponat iustificationem impii fieri regulariter per contritionem perfectam, ex virtute etiam huius actus omnium subsequentium operum debitam formationem derivare solet.

¹²⁰ Vermeersch, A., *Theologia Moralis*, I, n. 128, p. 132.

¹²¹ *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 7. Quotation *ut supra*. Cf. Vermeersch, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

will likewise be ordered to the end of charity; and since every good act is ordered to the end of some virtue, it will remain ordered to the end of charity, and hence will be meritorious.¹²²

If St. Thomas seems sometimes to demand a formal elicited act of charity in order that subsequent acts may be meritorious, this is so because he regularly supposes that justification takes place through perfect contrition which involves an act of charity.¹²³ In other words, if we understand Vermeersch correctly, St. Thomas demands a previous formal act of charity in order that subsequent acts of the other virtues may be meritorious, not from the *very nature of things*, that is, not *per se*, but *per accidens*; because he presupposes justification will take place through perfect contrition which involves an act of charity.

C. The Interpretation of Suarez, Mazzella, and Lehmkuhl

In this section of our work we are combining the opinions proffered by Suarez, Mazzella, and Lehmkuhl. As we saw, the differences between them are very slight, particularly if we except the distinction between the infused and acquired virtues made by Suarez. So closely related are they that there is sufficient justification to treat of their interpretation of St. Thomas *per modum unius*.

According to some of the authors who espouse one or the other view considered in this part of our study, the texts from St. Thomas which seem most opposed to their view are drawn from the *Summa*, the *De Veritate*, and the *De Potentia*.

In the *Summa* St. Thomas insists that the fruition of eternal life is the proper act of charity through which the acts of the other virtues are ordained to this end, according as the other virtues are commanded by charity. For this reason, he says,

¹²² *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, sol. in fine: . . . quia cum charitas imperet omnibus virtutibus sicut voluntas omnibus potentias, oportet quod quidquid ordinatur in finem alicujus virtutis, ordinetur in finem charitatis; et cum omnis actus bonus ordinetur in finem alicujus virtutis, in finem charitatis ordinatus remanebit, et ita meritorius erit. Cf. Vermeersch, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

¹²³ Vermeersch, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

merit belongs primarily to charity, and secondarily to the other virtues according as their acts are commanded by charity.¹²⁴

In the *De Veritate* he points out that any martyr, even the least, merits more than a confessor if we are judging merit by the type of work which is done. However, a confessor can merit more than a martyr, if we judge of merit from the source of the act. For it is possible for a confessor to act with greater charity than a martyr. The reason for this is that the essential reward comes from charity; the accidental reward comes from the kind of act which is done.¹²⁵

And in the *De Potentia*, he says simply that the efficacy of meriting comes from charity.¹²⁶

Suarez says that in these passages St. Thomas intends to say only that in some manner a work should pertain to supernatural charity, and should be rooted in charity. For this it suffices that the work be done from some supernatural motive, and by a just man, and that of itself it tends to the ultimate end which is supposed in the one performing the act.¹²⁷ Mazzella contends that this interpretation given the teaching of St. Thomas by

¹²⁴ *I-II*, q. 114, a. 4, corp: Et ideo meritum vitae aeternae primo pertinet ad charitatem, ad alias autem virtutes secundario, secundum quod earum actus a charitate imperantur.

¹²⁵ *De Veritate*, q. 26, a. 6, ad 8: Et ideo quantum ad genus operis plus meretur minimus Martyr quam quicumque Confessor. Tamen quantum ad radicem operis potest Confessor plus mereri, inquantum ex majori caritate operatur: quia praemium essentiale respondet radici caritatis, accidentale vero generi actus. Inde est quod aliquis Confessor potest aliquo martyre esse emenentior quantum ad praemium essentiale, Martyr tamen quantum ad praemium accidentale.

¹²⁶ *De Potentia*, q. 6, a. 9, corp: Nam omnes habet efficaciam merendi a caritate, quae nos unit Deo a quo meremur, et voluntatem perficit qua meremur; singulae tamen merentur singularia quaedam praemia eis proportionaliter respondentia; sicut humilitas meretur exaltationem, et paupertas regnum.

¹²⁷ Suarez, *op. cit.*, X, lib 12, c. 10, n. 24, p. 61: Et imprimis de antiquis Scholasticis, dicimus solum intendere necessarium esse ad meritum, ut opus aliquo modo pertineat ad supernaturalem charitatem, et in illa fundetur et radicetur; hoc autem habet eo ipso quod fit ex motivo quocumque supernaturali, dummodo fiat ab amico Dei, quia est proportionatum amicitiae divinae, et de se tendens in finem caritatis, quae in operante supponitur.

Suarez must be upheld unless we wish to say the Angelic Doctor contradicted himself.¹²⁸ For in the *De Caritate*, St. Thomas says that in anyone who has ordained himself to God as to the end, in all things which he does there remains the intention of the ultimate end, which is God; and hence in all things he can merit, if he have charity.¹²⁹ And perhaps even more clearly in *De Malo* where the Angelic Doctor states that it can happen sometimes that a man does not actually ordain some act to God, but nonetheless, since that act does not contain any inordination, by reason of which it could not be referred to God, and since the mind of man is habitually referred to God as to the ultimate end, that act is not only not a sin, but meritorious.¹³⁰ The Wirceburgenses, however, are not so definite in appealing to the authority of Thomas. They do not openly admit his opinion is opposed to their view, but in their statements that "his authority has no value as opposed to that of Trent," and "that it would not detract from his veneration had he thought differently (from Trent) before the definition of the Council," and finally "that they who labor through a *benign* interpretation (of the teaching of the Angelic Doctor) to conciliate his view with that of the Council" pursue a more honest method of action, . . . all point to at least an implicit admission that St. Thomas required something more than the habit of charity as being necessary for merit, however variously its effectiveness and role in commanding the virtues may be explained.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Mazzella, C., *De Virtutibus Infusis*, n. 1350, pp. 763, 764.

¹²⁹ *De Caritate*, q. 1, a. 11, ad 2: . . . cum aliquis se ipsum ordinat in Deum sicut in finem, in omnibus, quae propter se facit, manet intentio ultimi finis, qui Deus est: unde in omnibus mereri potest, si caritatem habet. Cf. Mazzella, *loc. cit.*

¹³⁰ *De Malo*, q. 9, a. 2, corp. in med: Dico autem mentem hominis non ordinari in Deum, actu vel habitu: quia contingit quandoque quod homo actu non ordinet aliquem actum in Deum, cum tamen actus ille de se non contineat aliquam inordinationem, ratione cuius non sit in Deum referibilis; et tamen quia mens hominis est habitualiter relata in Deum sicut in finem, actus ille non solum non est peccatum, sed etiam meritorius. Cf. Mazzella, *loc. cit.*

¹³¹ Kilber, H., *De Virtutibus Theologicis* (Theologia Dogmatica Wirceburgensis VIII) n. 310, p. 275: Quamvis nonnulli sint, qui, quod D. Thomam

John Wiggers feels that while St. Thomas seems to require the *imperium* of charity especially in the *Prima Secundae*,¹³² he may be understood in the following sense. The acts of the other virtues are not meritorious unless the virtues, and their acts are informed at least by reason of their conjunction with charity in the same subject after the manner in which the Scholastics speak of faith as being informed when it is conjoined to charity.¹³³ In the same way, the acts of the other virtues are said to be commanded by charity not by reason of some formal and express act of charity in virtue of which the other habits of virtue are moved to act, but at least through some implicit and interpretative *imperium* of charity. For this the habit of charity is sufficient.¹³⁴ Hence, for John Wiggers, when St. Thomas says that the other virtues and their acts are meritorious because commanded by charity, he means nothing more than that the other habits of virtue should have charity as their companion in order that their acts may be useful and meritorious; they need not always be moved by a formal and expressed *imperium* of charity.¹³⁵

In much the same manner, John Malderus thinks that the

aperte nobis contrarium putent, eumdem facile omitti posse censeant, propterea quod nec ejus auctoritas contra Tridentinum quid valeat, nec ejus venerationi quidpiam decedat, quod ille ante hujus Concilii definitionem aliter senserit: nihilominus aliorum agendi ratio, tanquam honestior, videtur praehabenda, qui *benigna* explicatione conciliare D. Th. cum Concilia laborant.

¹³² *I-II*, q. 114, a. 4, corp.

¹³³ Wiggers, J., *Commentaria in Primam Secundae Divi Thomae* IV, q. 114, a. 4, n. 62, p. 537: Possunt ea accipi eo sensu dicta a S. Th. quod actus aliarum virtutum non sint meritorii nisi virtutes, et ipsi actus informantur saltem per conjunctionem cum charitate in eodem supposito: sicuti Scholastici communiter vocant fidem vivam et formatam, quae habet charitatem coniunctam.

¹³⁴ *Op. cit.*, n. 63, p. 538: Et ut similiter dicantur isti actus debere imperari a charitate, non quidem per formalem et expressum actum charitatis, cuius virtute moveantur alii habitus ad operandum: sed saltem per aliquod imperium implicitum et interpretativum, quod non necessario in actu aliquo, sed in habitu potest intelligi consistere.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*: Videtur itaque requirere tantum, ut aliae virtutes habeant charitatem sociam, ut actus sint utiles et meritorii; non autem quod semper debeant a formalis et expresso charitatis imperio moveri ad operandum.

Angelic Doctor does not require either the actual or virtual *imperium* of charity for merit, even though he does say the meriting of eternal life belongs more principally to charity.¹⁸⁶ When he seems to require the *imperium caritatis* for the meritorious acts of the infused virtues, he means they should have the interpretative *imperium* of charity which consists in this that by their very nature these acts of infused virtues take their rise from charity as from their source, or that they tend to the end of charity, or that in them there is contained virtual charity, or in this that the virtues from whence they proceed are themselves informed by charity, or finally in this that charity is, as it were, the will in the supernatural order, and just as in natural things a work is not praiseworthy unless voluntary, so in the supernatural order a work is not said to be supernatural unless it proceed from charity which, by its nature, is the *reliquarum virtutum imperatrix*. However, such a work must come from charity through the medium of some infused virtue, as St. Thomas himself insinuates.¹⁸⁷

D. The Interpretation of the Salmanticenses

The Salmanticenses, conscious of Vasquez's objection against the validity of the Thomistic position, argue that *per se* a formal

¹⁸⁶ *Ioannis Malderi In Primam Secundae D. Thomae Commentaria*, q. 114, a. 2, dub. 8, p. 610.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*: Verum his et similibus locis, probabile est D. Thomam non voluisse ad meritum opus esse actuali aut virtuali charitatis imperio in operibus virtutum infusarum . . . sed solum ita locutum esse, quod actiones meritoriae vel sint actu distincto a charitate imperatae . . . vel saltem interpretativum habeant charitatis imperium quod consistat vel in eo, quod natura sua eiusmodi actiones procedant ex radice charitatis, aut tendant in finem charitatis, vel in eo quod includant virtualem aliquam dilectionem charitatis, charitas enim mandata et voluntatem Dei facit: vel in eo, quod virtutes unde procedunt sint informatae charitate; vel in eo quod charitas consideretur quasi voluntas in ordine hoc supernaturali, ut sicuti in naturalibus laudabile non est opus, nisi voluntarium, ita in supernaturalibus meritorum opus non censeantur, nisi procedat a charitate, quae natura sua est reliquarum virtutum imperatrix. Procedat inquam, mediante saltem aliqua virtute infusa, ut insinuat D. Thomas II-II, q. 83, ad 15, id est, eo ipso quo procedit a virtute infusa.

act of charity must precede the virtual reference to the final end, but that *per accidens* such a formal act of charity is not necessary, for it can be supplied by the Sacrament of Penance, or even without the Sacrament, immediately by God.¹³⁸ The reason they give for this interpretation of St. Thomas is noteworthy: namely, the opinion which teaches that a man, justified by the Sacrament of Penance with attrition, who before he elicits a formal act of charity, elicits meritorious acts. In view of this statement, which they do not deny, it is difficult, the Salmanticenses say, to save the *truth* of the oft repeated and universal necessity of an elicited, formal act of charity for the virtual reference of charity. To save the truth of the Thomistic teaching these commentators feel obliged to hold that *per se* such an elicited act of charity is necessary for the virtual reference; *per accidens*, in the case where a man is justified with the Sacrament, it is not necessary for the Sacrament supplies.¹³⁹ It must be noted that the Salmanticenses seem more concerned with what they deem the necessity of saving the *validity* of St. Thomas' teaching, than in trying to determine precisely what he taught; for the necessity of saving that validity is the first reason they allege for the interpretation they advance.¹⁴⁰

These authors argue for their interpretation of Thomas in the following manner. Every man by the very fact that he has grace, whether or not he has elicited a formal act of charity, possesses all the virtues as being informed. Therefore they elicit informed acts, meritorious of eternal life. The conclusion is evident, for in him who has made the act of charity all acts proceed as being informed and meritorious because they proceed from informed

¹³⁸ Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, X, tr. 16, disp. 4, dub. 6, n. 124, p. 778.

¹³⁹ *Op. cit.*, n. 118, p. 776: *Et sane cum casus oppositus, videlicet quod homo adultus per solam attritionem, et Sacramentum justificetur, maneatque in gratia aliquo tempore, ullo elicto actu formali charitatis, non sit raro contingens, sed saepe accidat, difficile salvabitur veritas propositionum D. Thom. ita universalium, si omnes praedicto modo justificati, quandiu actum illum non eliciunt, excipi deberent a praedicta doctrina. Et hoc sit primum pro nostra sententia argumentum.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

virtues and draw with themselves the information of these virtues.¹⁴¹

To substantiate their claim the Salmanticenses offer two confirmatory arguments. First, no one will deny that the acts of the infused virtues are meritorious even though the act of charity has not preceded, as long as the man is in the state of grace. Hence, the same thing must be said of the acts of the acquired virtues, for there is no greater necessity for the virtual reference of charity in the case of the acquired virtues than in that of the infused virtues. Therefore, there is no greater reason for requiring an antecedent formal act of charity in order that they may be meritorious. Further, it is impossible for a man in the state of grace to use some virtue informed by charity without by that very fact using the information given by charity. Hence, whether the act of charity has preceded or not, since all the virtues are informed by charity, it follows necessarily that in performing any act of virtue a man uses the information of that virtue by charity, and hence performs a meritorious act.¹⁴²

There is one other positive argument. If one demanded that a formal act of charity precede, even in the case of those who

¹⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, n. 119, pp. 776, 777: Nam eo ipso, quod homo sit in gratia, sive fecerit sive non fecerit actum formalem charitatis, omnes ejus virtutes sunt vivae, et formatae per ipsam charitatem . . .; igitur eliciunt actus vivos, et formatos, adeoque vitae aeternae meritorios. Patet consequentia, quia idcirco in illo qui fecit praedictum actum charitatis, omnes alii actus honesti procedunt formati, et meritorii, quia cum procedant a virtutibus vivis et formatis, secum trahunt vitam et formationem ipsarum virtutum.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*: Nam de actibus virtutum infusarum . . . nullus ausus est negare, quod in habente gratiam sint meritorii, sive actus charitatis precesserit, sive non praecesserit; ergo idem dicendum est de actibus aliarum virtutum; siquidem pro omnibus necessaria est relatio virtualis charitatis, et non est major ratio, quare haec relatio debeat supponere relationem formalem pro actibus virtutum acquisitarum, quam pro actibus infusarum . . .

Confirmatur secundo, qui non stat, hominem uti aliqua virtute informata charitate, et non eo ipso uti ejus informatione, ut supra *num.* 115 dicebamus: ergo cum omnes virtutes in habente gratiam, sive fecerit, sive non fecerit charitatis actum, sint vivae et formatae per charitatem; consequens est, ut qualibet virtute, sive infusa, sive acquisita talis homo utatur, etiam ejus formatione, eliciatque proinde actus formatos, et meritorios.

have grace through the Sacrament, then it would follow that not a few adults would attain eternal life not by reason of their merits, but solely *per modum haereditatis*, which they say, is commonly denied by theologians. However, these authors admit it could happen *in aliquo casu metaphysico*, but only most rarely; it could never be commonly admitted. This is so because many of those who receive the Sacrament with attrition die before they elicit a formal act of charity. As a result, none of their acts would be meritorious, and they would depart this life without any merit properly their own. Therefore, they would receive eternal glory, not as a crown, but only as an inheritance.¹⁴³

In explanation of their view these authors point out that although *per se* the act of charity is necessary for the infusion of grace and the virtues, it is not altogether indispensable, for *per accidens* grace can be infused without such an act, as often happens in the Sacrament, so that by the Sacrament God supplies what is needed. In such a case the virtues are informed through the habits of grace and charity, and there is communicated to them the intrinsic mode which the formal act of charity ordinarily imparts. Nor does the act of charity, which *per se* ought to have preceded, remain less virtually in such a case than if it had actually preceded.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ *Op. cit.*, n. 120, p. 777: *Nam ex opposita sententia sequitur, non paucos adultos recipere gloriam sine propriis meritis, more parvulorum per modum solius haereditatis: hoc autem communiter negant Theologi, licet veniam in aliquo casu metaphysico, et valde raro contingenti admitti potest, saepe tamen id contingere omnino est negandum. Ergo, etc. Sequela probatur; nam cum plures ex iis, qui cum sola attritione per Sacramentum justificantur, mori contingat antequam eliciant actum formalem charitatis, si ante hujusmodi actum nullus aetus in eis esset meritorius, decederent sine aliquo proprio merito; et ita non ut coronam, sed ut haereditatem dumtaxat gloriam consequerentur.*

¹⁴⁴ *Op. cit.*, n. 121, p. 777: *Quamvis autem ad praedictam infusionem necessarius sit per se actus charitatis, qui est dispositio ex nature rei ad justificationem requisita, non tamen omnino indispensabiliter; nam per accidens potest gratia infundi sine tali actu, ut infunditur saepe in Sacramento, supplente Deo, et Sacramenti virtute dispositionem subjecti. Tunc autem non aliter formantur virtutes per charitatem et gratiam, communicaturque illis modus habitualis intrinsecus, quam cum adest formaliter actus charitatis: nec minus actus iste, qui per se adesse debebat, remanet virtus-aliter in praedicto modo, quam si formaliter praecessisset.*

The reason is that God through the power of the Sacrament supplies for the necessity of the act of charity, and without it infuses grace with all its virtues. In the same way, without the act of charity, He is also able to infuse into the will and into all the virtues the virtual reference of charity, supplying for the necessity of the act of charity by means of the Sacrament. And just as grace, charity, and faith received in the Sacrament without any formal act of charity are not of a different nature, nor less efficacious than when they are infused together with an act of charity, so the virtual reference of charity infused into the will and into the other virtues, without a formal act of charity, is of the same nature and has the same efficacy to refer acts to the ultimate end, as when it is infused together with the formal act of charity upon which it depends *per se* from the very nature of things. For a mode of this kind, the virtual reference to the end, is a participation of grace and of charity, not only *quoad habitum*, but also *quoad actum*, which from the nature of the thing ought to have been present. So that as often as the virtues and the potencies operate, they act by reason of the aforementioned mode in virtue of grace and charity in the same way as the *virtus* which comes from the formally elicited act of charity.¹⁴⁵

And this mode always flows from grace through the medium of the habit of charity from which it depends that it may come into being, and may be conserved. Indeed, the act of charity

¹⁴⁵ *Op. cit.*, n. 122, pp. 777, 778: Et ratio est, quia sicut Deus virtute Sacramenti supplet necessitatem actus charitatis, et sine eo infundit gratiam cum omnibus suis virtutibus; ita sine illo potest etiam infundere voluntati, et omnibus virtutibus praedictum modum, supplente etiam quoad hoc virtute Sacramenti necessitatem talis actus. Et sicut gratia, charitas, et fides in Sacramento sine actu charitatis infusae non sunt alterius rationis, neque minoris efficaciae, quam quae infunduntur cum illo: ita praedictus modus ejusdem rationis est, et eandem efficaciam habet quoad referendum in finem charitatis, quando infunditur sine actu charitatis formaliter habito, et quando infunditur una cum ipso, et dependenter ab ea tanquam a per se requisito ex natura rei; semper enim ejusmodi modus est participium gratiae, et charitatis, non solum quoad habitus, sed etiam quoad actum, qui ex natura rei debebat adfuisse; et ideo quoties virtutes, et potentiae liberae postea operantur, agunt ratione praedicti modi in virtute gratiae, et charitatis, et ut virtus praedicti actus.

when it is present, concurs dispositively, or even effectively to such an emanation: when it is not present God supplies by virtue of the Sacrament for this influx. Hence, even then such a mode flows and is produced by God as the participated act of charity and it contains in itself the same power which the formally elicited act of charity could bestow.¹⁴⁶

If St. Thomas commonly demands that such a formal, elicited act of charity should precede in order that the acts of other virtues may be meritorious, this is so because *de facto*, it does ordinarily so precede, and because *per se* it is required and should precede. But from the very fact that it should precede, when *per accidens* it does not so precede, there is sufficient reason that all the good acts following the infusion of grace should tend virtually to the end of charity in the same way as if the formal act of charity had preceded. The simple fact that the formal act of charity has not preceded the subsequent acts of virtue does not detract from the fact that God *could* communicate to the other virtues this same power flowing from grace in an habitual manner which the very act of charity communicates, so that this *virtus* would influence subsequent acts.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ *Op. cit.*, n. 123, p. 778: . . . praedictum modum habitualem semper dimanare a gratia medio habitu charitatis, a quo dependet in fieri, et in conservari: actus vero charitatis, quando adest, concurrit dispositive, aut etiam quodammodo effective ad talem emanationem: quando vero non adest, supplet Deus virtute sacramenti ejus dependentiam, et influxum: unde etiam tunc dimanat talis modus, et producitur a Deo tanquam participium actus charitatis, et continet in se eandem virtutem, quam posset conferre praedictus actus.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*: Ex his ad primum respondetur, D. Thom. in suis testimoniis recurrere ad actum formalem charitatis praecedentem, et ad ordinationem per eum factam; quia hujusmodi actus, et ordinatio satis communiter praecedit, semperque praecedere debet, per se loquendo, et quantum est ex natura rei: et quia eo ipso, quod sic praecedere debeat, adest sufficiens ratio, ut etiam quando per accidens non praecedit, omnes actus boni infusionem gratiae subsequentes tendant virtualiter in finem charitatis, ac si praecessisset. Quod autem de facto non praecesserit, non tollit, quominus Deus possit communicare modo habituali dimanante a gratia in aliis virtutibus eandem virtutem, quam communicaret ipsem actus, et medio tali modo derivari haec virtus ad actus subsequentes.

Their answer to a pertinent objection will serve as a conclusion to the teaching of the Salmanticenses on this point. They say that although the virtual reference of an act to the end of charity *per se* supposes a formal reference to the same end through the elicited act of charity, *per accidens* it is able not to demand that an elicited act of charity precede, when God by virtue of the Sacrament supplies whatever would have been conferred by such an act in an effective manner.¹⁴⁸

E. The Interpretation of St. Bonaventure

Of course, St. Bonaventure himself does not appeal to St. Thomas in support of his view, but some of his followers do, at least in passing. Thus, Laymann expressly claims that his opinion is identical with that of the Angelic Doctor, but he is content with merely referring to certain texts in the various works of St. Thomas.¹⁴⁹ In the same way Sporer¹⁵⁰ is satisfied with referring to the text in the *Prima Secundae*¹⁵¹ to establish the fact that his view is the same as that of Thomas. There is no serious effort made even by Gotti and Billuart to show that when he spoke of a virtual influx of charity, St. Thomas meant to imply the necessity of repeating the formal act of charity.

F. The Interpretation of Van Noort

That St. Thomas teaches nothing different from his own view is Van Noort's claim. To substantiate it, he appeals to a passage from the Angelic Doctor's earliest work.

¹⁴⁸ *Op. cit.*, n. 124, p. 778: Nam etsi relatio virtualis alicujus actus ad finem charitatis, per se loquendo, supponat relationem formalem ad eundem finem; per accidens tamen potest illam non supponere, supplente Deo virtute Sacramenti (aut si vellet, etiam sine Sacramento) quidquid praestaret effective, aut dispositive formalis relatio, quae praecessisset.

¹⁴⁹ Laymann, P., *Theologia Moralis*, lib. 1, tr. 3, c. 1, n. 2, p. 223: Quarta sententia quam veram iudico, est S. Th. I-II, q. 114, a. 4; II-II, q. 23, a. 8, ad 3; *De Miraculis*, a. 9; *In IV Sent.* dist. 30, q. 1, a. 5.

¹⁵⁰ Sporer, P., *Theologiae Moralis Super Decalogum*, I, tr. 2, sect. 1, Assert. II, p. 208.

¹⁵¹ I-II, q. 114, a. 4, corp. Cf. Sporer, *op. cit.*, loc. cit.

The habitual ordination of an act to God does not at all suffice, for no one merits by reason of what he is habitually, but by reason of what he actually does. Nor is it necessary that an actual intention ordaining to the ultimate end be always conjoined to any action which is directed to some proximate end, but it is sufficient that at some time all those ends be actually referred to the ultimate end, as is done when one thinks to direct his whole self to the love of God; then indeed whatever he ordinates to himself will be ordained to God. And if it is asked when it is necessary to refer to the ultimate end, this is nothing else than to ask when is it necessary for the habit of charity to go into act, because whenever the habit goes into act there is an ordination of the whole man to the ultimate end, and consequently of all those things which are ordained to himself as good for himself.¹⁵²

Ballerini is somewhat more detailed in appealing to the Angelic Doctor. He alleges the following texts in support of his view.

If an act is not referred to God as to the end, this can happen in a twofold way. In one way, on the part of the act, namely, from the very fact that the act itself has not been ordained to the end, and so no inordinate act is able to be referred to the ultimate end, whether it be a mortal or venial sin; for an inordinate act is not a suitable means for arriving at the good end . . . And in another way, it can happen

¹⁵² *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6; Non sufficit omnino habitualis ordinatio actus in Deum: quia ex hoc quod est in habitu, nullus meretur, sed ex hoc quod actu operatur. Nec tamen oportet quod intentio actualis ordinans in finem ultimum sit semper conjuncta cuilibet actioni quae dicitur in aliquem finem proximum; sed sufficit quod aliquando actualiter omnes illi fines in finem ultimum referantur, sicut fit quando aliquis cogitat se totum ad Dei dilectionem dirigere; tunc enim quidquid ad seipsum ordinat, in Deum ordinatum erit. Et si quaeratur quando oporteat actum referre in finem ultimum, hoc nihil aliud est quam quaerere quando oportet habitum charitatis exire in actum: quia quandcumque habitus charitatis in actum exit, fit ordinatio totius hominis in finem ultimum, et per consequens omnium eorum quae in ipsum ordinantur ut bona sibi. Cf. Van Noort, *De Gratia Christi*, n. 214, pp. 199, 200.

on the part of the agent whose mind is not ordained actually or habitually to the due end.¹⁵³

Ballerini interprets the word *mens* precisely as the intellect, and he says St. Thomas is not speaking of an *action* which is habitually or actually ordained to the due end.¹⁵⁴ According to him the phrase *mens non ordinatur actu vel habitu in debitum finem* means simply that a person is in sin, and hence averted from the end.¹⁵⁵

However, I say that the mind of man is not ordained to God actually or habitually. Because it happens sometimes that a man does not ordain some act to God actually (*actu*) but since that act of itself contains no inordination by reason of which it may not be referred to God, and since the mind of man is habitually referred to God as to the end, that act will not only not be a sin, but it will be a meritorious act.¹⁵⁶

In this second part of the quotation from *De Malo* Ballerini again interprets the phrase *mens hominis est habitualiter relata in Deum sicut in finem* to mean simply that a man is in the state of grace. At no time does he give any reason for such an interpretation.

This author concludes that according to St. Thomas two things are required for merit. First that a man be in the state

¹⁵³ *De Malo*, q. 9, a. 2, corp. in med: Si aliquis actus non referatur in Deum sicut in finem, potest dupliciter contingere. Uno modo ex parte actus, scilicet eo quod ipse actus non est ordinatus in finem; et sic nullus actus inordinatus est referibilis in finem ultimum, sive sit peccatum mortale sive veniale; actus enim inordinatus non est conveniens medium quo perveniatur ad finem bonum . . . Alio modo contingit ex parte ipsius agentis, cuius scilicet mens non ordinatur actu vel habitu in debitum finem.

¹⁵⁴ Ballerini, A., *Opus Theologicum Morale*, I, n. 122, p. 115.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *De Malo*, q. 9, a. 2, corp. in med: Dico autem mentem hominis non ordinari in Deum, actu vel habitu: quia contingit quandoque quod homo actu non ordinat aliquem actum in Deum, cum tamen actus ille de se non contineat aliquam inordinationem, ratione cuius non sit in Deum referibilis; et tamen quia mens hominis est habitualiter relata in Deum sicut in finem, actus ille non solum non est peccatum, sed etiam est actus meritorius. Cf. Ballerini, *op. cit.*, n. 122, p. 115.

of grace. Secondly, that the act be capable of being referred to God. And the reason for this is that an act capable of being referred to God has been so referred by the elicited act of charity, and that ordination remains from the simple fact that one has charity.¹⁵⁷ Hence, Ballerini interprets Thomas as requiring for the virtual reference of charity nothing more than the ordination given by the very habit of charity once the act of charity has been made.¹⁵⁸

G. The Interpretation of the Dominican Commentators

These authors, of course, claim St. Thomas as their authority for the view that once made and never retracted, the formal act of charity perdures until revoked by mortal sin, and virtually commands every subsequent act of virtue, from at least the virtual *imperium* and motive of charity. To this opinion we subscribe. Because these authors quote at length from St. Thomas we shall not delineate their claims here, but will immediately attempt to give our interpretation of the teaching of the Angelic Doctor.

ARTICLE III

THE TEACHING OF ST. THOMAS

In this section of our third chapter, it is necessary to give, however briefly, the teaching of the Angelic Doctor concerning the possibility of indifferent acts. We find it nicely delineated in his first work.

There can be no act proceeding from the deliberate will which is not good or bad, not only according to the theologian, but even according to the moral Philosopher: and further, there can be no act proceeding from a deliberate power in one having grace which is not meritorious; but in one who does not

¹⁵⁷ Ballerini, *op. cit.*, n. 122, p. 114.

¹⁵⁸ *Op. cit.*, n. 118, p. 112: *Et hinc formula doctrinae Angelici, ad relationem operum in Deum (virtualem intellige) satis esse, quod quis sit in statu gratiae seu habitu caritatis non destituatur.*

have grace, there can be a deliberate act which is neither meritorious, nor demeritorious.¹⁵⁹

In this very brief quotation, St. Thomas states the following truths which are so basic to his entire system of thought: 1) there can be no deliberate act which is not either morally good or morally bad; 2) in one having grace, there can be no deliberate act which is not either meritorious or demeritorious; 3) in one who is not in the state of grace, there can be a deliberate act which is neither meritorious nor demeritorious. We are now primarily concerned with the second statement.

Further in this same passage St. Thomas gives the reason why in every deliberate act performed by a man in the state of grace, the act must be either meritorious or demeritorious.

For since charity commands all the virtues as the will does all the potencies, it is necessary that whatever is ordained to the end of any virtue be also ordained to the end of charity; and since every good act is ordained to the end of some virtue, it will remain ordained to the end of charity, and so will be meritorious.¹⁶⁰

According to the Angelic Doctor therefore, the reason why there cannot be any act performed by a man in the state of grace which is neither meritorious nor demeritorious is that charity commands the virtues, just as the will does its potencies. As a result, even though something be actually ordained to the end of some particular virtue other than charity, it will nevertheless be ordained to the end of charity because the particular virtue is commanded

¹⁵⁹ *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, Sol. in med: Nullus actus a voluntate deliberata progredivis potest esse qui non sit bonus vel malus, non tantum secundum theologum, sed etiam secundum moralem philosophum: et ulterius non potest esse aliquis actus a deliberativa virtute procedens in habente gratiam qui non sit meritorius; sed tamen in non habente gratiam potest esse aliquis actus deliberatus qui nec meritorius nec demeritorius est.

¹⁶⁰ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit. in fine: . . . quia cum charitas imperet omnibus virtutibus sicut voluntas omnibus potentias, oportet quod quidquid ordinatur in finem alicujus virtutis, ordinetur in finem charitatis; et cum omnis actus bonus ordinetur in finem alicujus virtutis, in finem charitatis ordinatus remanebit, et ita meritorius erit. Cf. *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 7.

by charity. The question we must now decide is whether in the opinion of St. Thomas the very habit of charity is sufficient to command the virtues as the will does the other potencies, or whether he requires some intention or motive of charity in order that the virtues may be said to be commanded by charity as the will commands the potencies.

A. The Habitual Reference of Charity

St. Thomas speaks of the habitual ordination or reference of our works to God in the following manner.

He habitually refers [something] to God who neither does anything, nor actually intends anything, as one sleeping.¹⁶¹

Very definite is St. Thomas' statement that the mere possession of the habit of charity is not sufficient for merit.

The habitual ordination of an act to God does not at all suffice, for by reason of what one is habitually (*in habitu*) no one merits, but rather by reason of what one actually does.¹⁶²

The following is his statement concerning those acts performed by the will perfected by the habit of charity.

Not every act proceeding from the will informed by charity is meritorious, if one regards the will merely as a potency; otherwise venial sins which those who have charity sometimes commit, would be meritorious. But it is true that every act which is from charity (*ex charitate*) is meritorious . . . Whence the mode [of charity] is included under the necessity of the

¹⁶¹ *De Caritate*, q. 1, a. 11, ad 3: *Habitualiter enim refert in Deum et qui nihil agit, nec aliquid actualiter intendit, ut dormiens.*

¹⁶² *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6: *Non sufficit omnino habitualis ordinatio actus in Deum: quia ex hoc quod est in habitu, nullus meretur, sed ex hoc quod actu operatur.*

precept, according as the precept is ordained to attain beatitude.¹⁶³

Not only is the mere possession of the habit of charity not sufficient for merit, but not every act performed even by the will perfected by the habit of charity is meritorious, else we should have to say that venial sins are meritorious. In order to be meritorious, an act proceeding from the will perfected by the habit of charity must be done *ex caritate*, in such wise that the mode of charity is contained in that act, since in all acts that tend to the attainment of beatitude the mode of charity falls under the precept of charity. From these statements of the Angelic Doctor, and from what has been said concerning charity as the effective form of the virtues, it seems certain that for a meritorious act, St. Thomas requires not merely the presence of the habit of charity, or that an act be done *cum caritate*, but the presence of *some intention* of charity.

This conclusion is considerably strengthened by a passage taken from the *Summa*.

First of all it must be considered that eternal life consists in the fruition of God. However, the motion of the human mind towards the fruition of the divine good is the proper act of charity, through which all the acts of the other virtues are ordained to this end, according as the other virtues are commanded by charity. And therefore the meriting of eternal life belongs first to charity, and secondarily to the other virtues according as their acts are commanded by charity.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 7: Non omnis actus procedens a voluntate informata caritate est meritorius, si voluntas pro potentia accipiatur: alioquin venalia peccata essent meritoria, quae committunt interdum etiam caritatem habentes. Sed verum est quod omnis actus qui est ex caritate, est meritorius . . . Unde modus sub necessitate praecepti includitur, secundum quod praeceptum ordinatur ad consecutionem beatitudinem.

¹⁶⁴ *I-II*, q. 114, a. 4, corp: . . . primo enim considerandum est quod vita aeterna in Dei fruitione consistit. Motus autem humanae mentis ad fruitionem divini boni est proprius actus charitatis, per quem omnes actus aliarum virtutum ordinantur in hunc finem, secundum quod aliae virtutes

Here the Angelic Doctor seems quite explicit in telling us that the *acts* of the other virtues are meritorious in so far as their acts are commanded by charity, and that it is the *act* of charity which commands these virtues, for "*the motion of the human mind towards the fruition of the divine good is the proper act of charity, through which all the acts of the other virtues are ordained to this end.*" This text seems clearly to suppose that the acts of the inferior virtues are meritorious in so far as they are commanded by the act of charity, which necessarily involves the intention and motive of charity.

This interpretation seems to be confirmed from St. Thomas' teaching on the manner in which the will commands the inferior powers. We recall that charity is said to command the inferior virtues in the same way as the will does the inferior potencies. Now in discussing the inter-relation of the intellect and the will, the Angelic Doctor says that in moving or acting the will is prior to the intellect because *every action or motion is from the intention of the good*. And since the will has for its object *bonum sub ratione boni*, it is said to move the inferior powers.¹⁶⁵ If we carry out the analogy suggested by St. Thomas, it would seem that charity is said to command the inferior power, which are the virtues, from the intention of that good which is its proper object, *Deus sub ratione bonitatis*. And for this reason charity would be prior to faith, and the universal mover of all the virtues.

B. The Nature of the Reference of Charity Required by Thomas

According to St. Thomas, therefore, it would appear that the habitual reference of charity, or an act performed *cum caritate*, is not sufficient for merit. The act of charity, and hence the intention of charity is somehow necessary. We must now in-

imperantur a charitate. Et ideo meritum vitae aeternae primo pertinet ad charitatem, ad alias autem virtutes secundario, secundum quod earum actus a charitate imperantur.

¹⁶⁵ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 5: . . . Sed in movendo sive agendo voluntas est prior: quia omnis actio vel motus est ex intentione boni: et inde est quod voluntas omnes vires inferiores movere dicitur, cuius objectum proprium est bonum sub ratione boni.

quire into what extent they are required. The following passages should help us form our judgment.

Besides, for this that some act be meritorious in one having charity, it is not necessary that it [the act] be actually referred to God.¹⁶⁶

That all things be actually referred to God is not possible in this life, just as it is not possible that one always think of God, this pertains to the perfection of heaven.¹⁶⁷

Nevertheless, it is not necessary that the actual intention ordaining to the ultimate end be always conjoined to each action which is [ordinated] to some proximate end.¹⁶⁸

Surely in these passages it is definitely taught that it is neither necessary nor possible in this life to have an actual intention of charity, or an actual reference of charity in every act that we do. It would seem that by the actual intention of charity St. Thomas means the thinking of God, or of charity while performing an act.¹⁶⁹

If then the habitual reference of charity is not sufficient for merit, and the actual intention and reference of charity, in the sense that we must be actually thinking of God or of charity while performing an act, is not required, just what intention and reference of charity does St. Thomas demand? We think the answer is given in the following passages.

¹⁶⁶ *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 11: *Alia tria concedimus. Cf. obj. 11: Praeterea, ad hoc quod aliquis sit actus meritorius in habente caritatem, non requiritur quod actu referatur in Deum.*

¹⁶⁷ *De Caritate*, q. 1, a. 11, ad 2: *Quod omnia actu referre in Deum, non est possibile in hac vita, sicut non est possibile quod semper de Deo cogitetur; hoc enim pertinet ad perfectionem patriae.*

¹⁶⁸ *In II Sent. dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6: Nec tamen oportet quod intentio actualis ordinans in finem ultimum sit semper conjuncta cuilibet actioni quae dicitur in aliquem finem proximum.*

¹⁶⁹ Cf. *In II Sent. dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6. In II Sent. dist. 38, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4. De Caritate, q. 1, a. 11, ad 2.*

It is sufficient that at some time all those ends [proximate ends] be actually referred to the ultimate end; as is done when one thinks to direct his whole self to the love of God: then indeed whatever he ordinates to himself will be ordinated to God.¹⁷⁰

Here St. Thomas tells us that our actions, even those in which we actually advert only to some secondary end, will be meritorious provided that at some time we did actually refer these secondary ends to God by a formal, elicited act of charity. In short, St. Thomas requires that at some time we refer all our actions to God from the actual intention of charity. That done, all subsequent actions will be referred to God, even though in the performance we think only of our own interest.

We are now told the reason why this is so.

For this that the end of any action be God or charity, it is not necessary that in performing that action one think of God or of charity; . . . but it is necessary that first there should have been thought concerning the end which is charity, or God; and that the intellect should have ordained the following actions to this end, so that the rectitude of that ordination will be saved in the following actions.¹⁷¹

This passage adds to the above quotation the following explanatory note. When the intellect has actually referred all subsequent actions to God out of love for him, then the rectitude of that act is conserved in all following actions.

¹⁷⁰ *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6: . . . sed sufficit quod aliquando actualiter omnes illi fines in finem ultimum referantur, sicut fit quando aliquis cogitat se totum ad Dei dilectionem dirigere; tunc enim quidquid ad seipsum ordinat, in Deum ordinatum erit.

¹⁷¹ *In II Sent.* dist. 38, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4: Ad hoc quod alicujus actionis finis sit Deus vel charitas, non oportet quod agendo illam actionem aliquis de Deo vel charitate cogitet; nec iterum sufficit quod aliquis in habitu tantum Deum et charitatem habeat, quia sic etiam actum venialis peccati aliquis in Deum ordinaret, quod falsum est: sed oportet quod prius fuerit cogitatio de fine, qui est charitas vel Deus, et quod ratio actiones sequentes in hunc finem ordinaverit; ita quod rectitudo illius ordinationis in actionibus sequentibus salvetur.

These two passages just cited seem very clear and definitive. It is true that all the actions of one in the state of grace are meritorious even though the one acting does not actually think of God while acting, *provided* that at some previous time the one now acting did actually elicit a formal act of charity, referring himself and through the exercise of the intellect, all secondary ends he would seek, to God for love of Him. According to St. Thomas, therefore, a formal, elicited act of charity is required in order that all subsequent acts may be meritorious. Once made, however, all subsequent acts performed by one in the state of grace will be meritorious, even though the one acting is not reflexively conscious of God or charity at the time. And the reason for this is that the rectitude of that first actual intention and reference of charity is conserved in all subsequent acts.

We may now legitimately inquire, how can this be? If we do not actually refer secondary ends to God, if we do not actually think of God in seeking secondary ends, how can an act of charity elicited perhaps long ago be said to refer actions performed here and now to God from a motive of charity? The answer which St. Thomas gives is classic.

To refer all things to God actually (*actu*) is not possible in this life, just as it is not possible that God be always thought of; this pertains to the perfection of heaven; but that all things be virtually (*virtute*) referred to God, this pertains to the perfection of charity to which all are bound. To appreciate this, it must be considered that just as in efficient causes the *virtus* of the first cause remains in all following causes; so also, the intention of the principal end remains virtually (*virtute*) in all secondary ends; hence, whoever actually (*actu*) intends a secondary end, virtually (*virtute*) intends the principal end; just as a doctor, while he gathers together herbs actually intends to make a potion perhaps thinking nothing about health, none-the-less does virtually intend health, for which he gives the potion. So therefore, when anyone ordinates himself to God as to the end, in all things which he does in his own interest there remains virtually (*virtute*) the intention of the ultimate end which is God; hence, in all things he can merit if he have charity. In this manner therefore

does the Apostle command that all things be referred to the glory of God.¹⁷²

In this place St. Thomas points out the reason why the rectitude of the formal act of charity remains in the secondary ends, and why it is not necessary actually to think of God in the performance of our actions in order that they may be meritorious, provided a formal act of charity has been elicited. Once, he says, the final end has been intended, then the intention of the final end will remain in the performance of secondary ends, even though at that time we do not actually think of God. Consequently, whoever actually intends a secondary end once a formal act of charity has been elicited, also intends the final end by reason of the *virtus* which remains in the secondary ends from the previous intention of the final end. Now it is indisputable that the intention of the final end whereby we refer ourselves and all our works to God is, in St. Thomas' mind, an *actual* intention.¹⁷³ Hence, when St. Thomas says that the "*intention of the principal end remains in virtue in all secondary ends; hence, whoever actually intends a secondary end, virtually intends the principal end,*" we must conclude that the intention which remains is an *actual intention in virtue*. Therefore, a man who is in

¹⁷² *De Caritate*, q. 1, a. 11, ad 2: *Omnia actu referre in Deum, non est possibile in hac vita, sicut non est possibile quod semper de Deo cogitetur; hoc enim pertinet ad perfectionem patriae; sed quod omnia virtute referantur in Deum, hoc pertinet ad perfectionem caritatis ad quam omnes tenentur.* Ad cuius evidentiam considerandum est, quod, sicut in causis efficientibus virtus primae causae manet in omnibus causis sequentibus; ita etiam intentio principalis finis virtute manet in omnibus finibus secundariis; unde quicumque actu intendit aliquem finem secundarium, virtute intendit finem principalem; sicut medicus, dum colligit herbas actu, intendit conficere potionem, nihil fortassis de sanitate cogitans; virtualiter tamen intendit sanitatem, propter quam potionem dat. Sic igitur, cum aliquis se ipsum ordinat in Deum, sicut in finem; in omnibus quae propter se ipsum facit manet virtute intentio ultimi finis, qui Deus est; unde in omnibus mereri potest, si caritatem habeat. Hoc igitur modo Apostolus praecipit quod omnia in Dei gloriam referantur. Cf. *De Virtutibus in Communi*, q. 2, a. 11, ad 2. *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 7.

¹⁷³ Cf. *Op. cit.*, loc. cit. *In II Sent.* dist. 38, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4. *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6.

the state of grace and who has elicited a formal act of charity, in every good act he does, at the very least actually intends the secondary end *in actu*, and *actually intends the final end in virtute*.

Therefore, necessarily, the ordination of the secondary end to the final end effected by the *virtus* remaining in the secondary ends from a previously elicited act of charity, as well as the ordination to the end effected by an act of charity when one is actually thinking of God, (the specific difference between the actual intention *in virtute*, and the actual intention *in actu*) are both *actual ordinations or references of charity to the end*. The reference to the end effected by charity when one is reflexively conscious of the intention of charity while acting is an *actual ordination or reference of charity in actu*. The actual ordination or reference of charity effected by reason of the *virtus* remaining in the secondary ends as a result of the actual intention *in actu*, even though here and now while acting one is not reflexively conscious of any intention or motive of charity, is an *actual ordination or reference of charity to the final end in virtute*. In the following text St. Thomas puts the matter nicely.

To do all for the glory of God can be understood in a twofold manner: affirmatively or negatively . . . If, however, it is understood affirmatively, this [also] can be [done] in two ways. Either so that the *actual reference* to God is conjoined to each of our actions, *not indeed actually, but virtually*, according as the *virtus* of the first reference remains in all following actions, just as the *virtus* of the ultimate end remains in all the ends ordained to it; thus far it is a precept and its omission can be either a venial or a mortal sin.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ *In II Sent. dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 7: Omnia in gloriam Dei facite, potest intelligi dupliciter: vel affirmative vel negative . . . Si autem intelligatur affirmative, hoc potest esse dupliciter. Aut ita quod actualis relatio in Deum sit conjuncta actioni nostrae cuilibet, non quidem in actu, sed in virtute, secundum quod virtus primae ordinationis manet in omnibus actionibus sequentibus, sicut et virtus finis ultimi manet in omnibus finibus ad ipsum ordinatis; et sic adhuc praeceptum est, et contingit omissionem ejus esse venialem vel mortalem.*

Now this *virtus* remaining in the secondary ends after an elicited act of charity has been made, is precisely charity as the effective form of the virtues.

It would seem to follow from this that the so-called virtual intention is really an actual intention *in virtute*; and the so-called virtual reference to the end is really an actual reference *in virtute*. From what has been said it seems certain that for St. Thomas, granted that a man was in the state of grace and had elicited a formal act of charity, every good act he performed will be meritorious *at least as long as the intention of the ultimate end remains in virtute*. And since he himself does not limit the causal effectiveness of the *virtus* remaining from the actual intention and reference of charity either to a certain period of time, or to a definite species of acts, we must take him quite literally when he says that "in all things" we can merit¹⁷⁵ and that "*whatever* he ordinates to himself will be ordained to God";¹⁷⁶ and that the "rectitude of that ordination will be saved in the following actions."¹⁷⁷

The following seems then to be the teaching of the Angelic Doctor concerning the influx of charity required for merit. A formal, elicited act of charity whereby we refer ourselves and all subsequent works to God must precede in order that subsequent actions may be meritorious. Once made and never retracted, this actual intention of charity purdures virtually in all our actions, so that we refer every good act we do while in the state of grace to God from the actual-virtual intention and motive of charity. Such an intention of charity is both necessary and sufficient for merit.

ARTICLE IV

CONFIRMATORY ARGUMENTS

As the reader is now aware, St. Thomas builds the presen-

¹⁷⁵ *De Caritate*, q. 2, a. 11, ad. 2. *Quotation ut supra*.

¹⁷⁶ *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6. *Quotation ut supra*.

¹⁷⁷ *In II Sent.* dist. 38, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4. *Quotation ut supra*. Cf. *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 7, 11.

tation of his teaching on metaphysical grounds; the only Scripture text to which he appeals consistently is that giving the admonition of St. Paul, to do everything for the glory of God.¹⁷⁸ Obviously, since he lived before the Council of Trent, there is no reference to that teaching body. However, his commentators do discuss certain Scripture texts, and do allege certain passages from Trent to confirm the view expressed by the Angelic Doctor. They are presented, however, principally in the form of replies to the opinions advanced by Vasquez and Suarez. As such, we give them here.

A. Reply to the Arguments From Scripture

The arguments presented by Vasquez and Suarez may be classified under three heads: 1) those taken from Scripture; 2) those taken from the Council of Trent; 3) those drawn from reason. From practically the same testimony, these authors drew different conclusions. Vasquez maintains that no supernatural motive whatever is needed for merit, either in the case of the acquired or infused virtues. An actual grace and the presence of the habit of charity are sufficient. Suarez reasons that at least in the case of the acquired virtues some supernatural motive drawn from faith, besides an actual grace and the habit of charity, are required for a meritorious act.

John of St. Thomas¹⁷⁹ answers that in the Sacred Scripture merit is indeed promised to works of mercy, etc., but on the condition that these works be done "*in nomine Christi*", or "*propter Christum*", or "*in gloriam Dei*": all of which, according to him, designate at least the virtual reference of charity.

Such expressions are to be found, for example, in St. Luke: "*Whoever receives this little child for my sake, (in nomine meo) receives me.*"¹⁸⁰ And in St. Matthew: "*And everyone who has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake (propter nomen meum)*

¹⁷⁸ I Cor. 10, 13.

¹⁷⁹ *Cursus Theologicus*, VI, q. 114, disp. 30, a. 1, n. IX, p. 914.

¹⁸⁰ Luke 9, 48.

shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting."¹⁸¹ The same phraseology is found in St. Mark: "*For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in my name, (in nomine meo) because you are Christ's, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.*"¹⁸² These texts, or similar ones are commonly quoted by Thomistic Commentators.¹⁸³

In these texts, remarks John of St. Thomas, the motive necessary that we may receive the reward promised, is clearly indicated. The work must be done "*in nomine Christi, et quia sumus Christi*".¹⁸⁴ By reason of this condition, he sees in these texts the necessity for at least the virtual reference of charity.¹⁸⁵

Gonet adds the following Pauline citations to confirm the Thomistic viewpoint. First of all, the epistle to the Corinthians: "*Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or do anything else, do all for the glory of God.*"¹⁸⁶ And secondly, the epistle to the Colossians: "*Whatever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*"¹⁸⁷ And John of St. Thomas appeals to Galatians: "*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision is of any avail, nor uncircumcision, but faith which works through charity.*"¹⁸⁸ Consequently, not even the patience of the martyr which is among the greatest of good works would be crowned unless it were done from love, as St. James says: "*Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been tried, he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him.*"¹⁸⁹ Apropos these texts, Gonet remarks that the Apostle would not be so solicitous

¹⁸¹ Matthew 19, 29.

¹⁸² Mark 9, 40.

¹⁸³ Cf. Gonet, *Clypeus Thomisticus*, V, disp. 2, a. 6, n. CXXXVI, p. 85. Billuart, F. C. R., *Summa Sancti Thome*, III, dissert. 8, a. 4. Gotti, V. L., *Theologia Scholastico-Dogmatica*, II, tr. 7, q. 2, dub. 4. Contenson, V., *Theologia Mentis et Cordis*, II, lib. 7, dissert. 5, cap. 2, Spec. 2, p. 425.

¹⁸⁴ *Op. cit.*, loc. cit.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ I Cor. 10, 31.

¹⁸⁷ Colossians 3, 17. Cf. Gonet, *op. cit.*, n. CXXXVII, p. 85. Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, tr. 16, disp. 4, dub. 5, n. 107, p. 771; n. 111, p. 773.

¹⁸⁸ Galatians 5, 6.

¹⁸⁹ James 1, 12. Cf. John of St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, nn. X, XI, p. 915.

that whatever we do be done in the name of Jesus, or for the glory of God, if it were not necessary for merit; if, in his mind, the habitual reference of charity were sufficient. Therefore, he must be requiring at least the virtual reference of charity.¹⁹⁰

Hence, when in St. Matthew it is said that "*whoever does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother*",¹⁹¹ or when eternal life is promised to those who do works of mercy,¹⁹² these works must be understood to be worthy of the reward of eternal life only if done with at least the virtual reference of charity; otherwise the one acting would not be perfectly fulfilling the will of God. That this virtual reference of charity is required for doing the will of the Father in heaven, is evident from Colossians 3, 17 as quoted above. Further, as we have pointed out, for merit works must be done in the name of Christ, or because of Christ, or for the glory of Christ. Therefore, when merit is promised to these works of mercy, it is only on the condition that they be done "*in nomine Christi*," or "*propter Christum*," which is the same as saying that they must be done with at least a virtual reference of charity.¹⁹³

To confirm his interpretation, Gonet¹⁹⁴ appeals to the sermon of St. Leo on Matthew 25 where he says:

. . . but because that which does not proceed from the font of faith, does not arrive at eternal reward, there is one condition for heavenly works, and another for terrestrial works.¹⁹⁵

When St. Leo speaks of faith, he is speaking of faith informed by charity, or faith working through love; hence, we may conclude, says Gonet, that works of mercy are not celestial, that is,

¹⁹⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 85, 86. Cf. John of St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, n. X, p. 915.

¹⁹¹ Matthew 12, 50.

¹⁹² Cf. Matthew 10, 42; 25, 34-40.

¹⁹³ Gonet, *op. cit.*, nn. CXLIV-CXLVII, pp. 86-87.

¹⁹⁴ *Op. cit.*, n. CXLVII, p. 87. Cf. John of St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, n. IX, p. 914.

¹⁹⁵ Apud Gonet, *op. cit.*, l. c.: . . . sed quia quod non ex fidei procedit fonte, ad praemia aeterna non pervenit, alia est conditio operum coelestium, alia terrenorum.

worthy of merit, unless at least virtually commanded by charity.¹⁹⁶ Ferland¹⁹⁷ seeks further confirmation of this view in the following passages from St. Augustine.

Each one of us proves his work, says the Holy Father, whether it comes from the vein of charity, or whether the branches of good works are nourished from the root of love.¹⁹⁸

The good master rightly commends love often as the only thing to be commanded without which good works cannot be, and which cannot be had without the other goods by which man is made good.¹⁹⁹

We offer the following criticism of the Scripture passages alleged by the Thomists in confirmation of their view, criticisms which are necessary in order that our evaluation of the Thomistic teaching to be given later, may not be without foundation.

At least three of the Scripture texts which the Thomistic commentators allege in support of their view have the phrase “*in nomine Christi*” or “*propter Christum*.” Because of this phrase, these authors think that the virtual reference of charity is required for merit. How strong is this argument?

According to the Greek text the pertinent phrases read as follows:

- 1) Luke 9, 48: ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου.
- 2) Mark 9, 40: ἐν ὀνόματι, ὅτι Χριστοῦ ἔστε.
- 3) Col. 3, 17: ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ.

Apropos the phrase ἐν ὀνόματι as used in Mark 9, 40,

¹⁹⁶ Gonet, *op. cit.*, n. CXLVII, p. 87.

¹⁹⁷ Ferland, A., *De Gratia*, p. 329.

¹⁹⁸ *In Epist. Joannis ad Parthos tractatus decem*, Tr. VI, n. 2 (MPL 35, 2020): Opus ergo suum probet unusquisque nostrum, ait S. Pater, utrum de vena charitatis emanet, utrum de radice dilectionis rami bonorum operum pullulent.

¹⁹⁹ *In Joan. Evangelium*, Tr. 87, n. 1. (MPL 35, 1852-1853): Merito itaque magister bonus dilectionem sic saepe commendat, tanquam sola praecipienda sit, sine qua non possunt prodesse caetera bona, et quae non potest haberi sine caeteris bonis, quibus homo efficitur bonus.

Lagrange remarks that it is not equivalent to "*in nomine Christi*." It is strictly a Greek expression finding its equivalent in the phrase ἐπὶ τῷ so that when preceding ἐν ὀνόματι it means simply: *because you belong to Christ.*²⁰⁰

The meaning of the text in which the phrase ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου occurs, is disputed. The complete text, taken from Luke 9, 48, follows.

ὅς εἰὰν δέξηται τοῦτο τὸ παιδίον ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου,
ἔμε δέχεται· καὶ ὃς εἰὰν ἔμε δέξηται, δέχεται τὸν ἀποστεί-
λαντά με· ὁ γὰρ μικρότερος ἐν πᾶσιν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχων,
οὗτος ἔστιν μέγας.

Lagrange gives several opinions as to its precise meaning. He cites Loisy as maintaining that it means to receive children; Knabenbauer thinks it refers to the "*cura parvolorum*"; Holtmeister sees the child represented in this incident as a type of humility. But Lagrange himself thinks the phrase τὸ παιδίον refers to the child among the disciples, that is, the *least* among the disciples. He connects τὸ παιδίον with ὁ γὰρ μικρότερος ἐν πᾶσιν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχων οὗτος ἔστιν μέγας and translates the whole text thus: "*Whoever receives this child (that is, the least among you, my disciples) in my name, receives me, and whoever receives me, receives him who sent me: for the very least among you, is indeed great.*"²⁰¹ Hence, to be even the least of the disciples of Christ is a great privilege, so much so that it entitles one to be received as if he were the Master Himself. Therefore, the force of ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου in this passage is the same as in Mark. Our Lord is saying that whoever receives even the least of his disciples *because he is his disciple*, and representative of Himself, receives Christ and Him who sent Christ.²⁰²

Nor does the text from Colossians 3, 17 give any more explicit evidence of the necessity for the virtual reference of charity.

²⁰⁰ Lagrange, M. J., *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, p. 234.

²⁰¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 281: Quiconque reçoit cet enfant en mon nom, me reçoit, et quiconque me reçoit, reçoit celui qui m'a envoyé: car le plus petit qui soit parmi vous tous, celui-là est grand.

²⁰² *Op. cit.*, p. 282.

According to Zorrell²⁰³ the phrase ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ means nothing more than to honor Jesus by doing what we are commanded to do with faith in him. We might paraphrase the text thus: In whatever we do, we are to act as disciples of Jesus.

Two other phrases cited by the Commentators are slightly different from the preceding. In the Greek text they read thus:

- 1) Matthew 19, 29: ἔνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός μου
- 2) I Cor. 10, 31: πάντα εἰς δόξαν Θεοῦ ποιεῖτε

Apropos the text from Matthew, Zorrell²⁰⁴ gives the following paraphrase of ἔνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός μου: *quae propter Christianorum in Christum fidem ab his fiunt vel ab eorum adversariis.* It is difficult to see how this text necessarily demands the virtual influx of charity for a meritorious act. As regards the phrase πάντα εἰς δόξαν Θεοῦ ποιεῖτε in 1 Cor. 10, 31, Allo has this to say: "Paul gives here his golden rule, a resumé of all his moral practice; the most insignificant actions ought to be ordained to the divine glory, while eating, and everywhere."²⁰⁵ Although it is clear that we are admonished to do all for the glory of God, there is no evident indication in the text that a virtual reference of charity is necessary for this.²⁰⁶ The final passage advanced by the Commentators to confirm the view expressed by the Angelic Doctor is found in Galatians: "*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision is of any avail, nor uncircumcision, but faith which works through charity.*"²⁰⁷ To our mind, it cannot be proven from this text that the virtual reference of charity is necessary for merit, but only that the habit of charity is certainly required and that faith must be in some way operative. When

²⁰³ Zorrell, F., *Lexicon Graecum Novi Testament, apud onoma*, col. 919.

²⁰⁴ *Op. cit.*, col. 918.

²⁰⁵ Allo, E. B., *Première Epitre Aux Corinthiens*, p. 251: Paul donne ici sa règle d'or, le résumé de toute sa morale pratique; les actions les plus insignifiantes doivent toutes être ordonées à la gloire divine, et dans les repas et partout.

²⁰⁶ Cf. Zorell, F., *op. cit.*, col. 918. Commenting on this passage, he says that Paul is here beseeching the Christians to do all through Jesus whom they adore as God and Saviour in order to glorify him. Cf. *Op. cit.*, *apud doxa*, col. 331.

²⁰⁷ Galatians 5, 6.

St. Paul says that faith must work through charity, it is not necessary to conclude that he means faith must operate from a *motive* of charity. The necessary meaning of the text is sufficiently satisfied if we say that faith which operates must have its *source* in charity.

Purposefully have we stated that the texts alleged in support of their view by the Thomists do not *evidently* teach the necessity of a virtual reference of charity for merit; or that such is not the *necessary* interpretation of the texts. We believe we are correct in making such a statement. However, we by no means exclude the possibility that such is actually the meaning of the texts. In our view, however, the Thomists have not effectively demonstrated their position from Scripture by appealing to these passages. In our opinion, the confirmatory arguments given from Scripture have precisely this value: these texts *may* be interpreted to mean that for merit the virtual reference of charity is required, and hence the Thomistic view may be said to be in accord with Sacred Scripture; but such is not the *evident* nor the *necessary* interpretation of these passages.

B. Reply to the Arguments From Trent

We recall that Vasquez appealed to the Council of Trent to establish his view that nothing more than the habitual reference of charity plus an actual grace is required for merit for Trent itself requires nothing more. From the same source Suarez drew the conclusion that a motive presented by faith is also necessary, at least in the case of the acquired virtues.

Now Gonet points out that when Trent says "*iustificati et amici Dei . . . euntes de virtute in virtutem, renovantur de die in diem . . . in sanctificationem per observationem mandatorum Dei et Ecclesiae; in ipsa iustitia per Christi gratiam accepta, . . . crescunt atque magis iustificantur*",²⁰⁸ it adds the qualifying phrase "*cooperante fide bonis operibus*",²⁰⁸ which, he says, refers to informed faith operating through love. Similarly, when Trent says that the good works of the just merit eternal life, it is speaking of works which proceed from grace and charity, for it

²⁰⁸ DBU, 803.

says those works merit which are done in God: “*nihil ipsis iustificatis amplius deesse credendum est, quominus plene illis quidem operibus, quae in Deo sunt facta, divinae legi pro huius vitae statu satisfecisse, et vitam aeternam suo etiam tempore (si tamen in gratia decesserint) consequendam vere promeruisse censeantur.*”²⁰⁹ Hence, according to Gonet, just as when works were said to be done in the name of Christ, it is understood that they are to be done from the *imperium* of charity, and so to be ordained to God from at least the virtual reference of charity, the same thing is indicated here by the phrase *quae in Deo sunt facta*.²¹⁰

John of St. Thomas argues in much the same fashion. Commenting on the words: “*crescunt justi in justitia, cooperante fide bonis operibus,*”²¹¹ he says that faith does not cooperate save through a supernatural judgment. Therefore the Council believes that the works of the just do not merit unless done from a supernatural motive supplied by faith. Likewise, when in the sixteenth chapter the Council says: “*sine virtute quam Christus jugiter influit in justificatos non possunt eorum opera esse grata Deo, et meritoria,*”²¹² by the term *virtutis* it understands not merely habitual grace but some actual motion and help, for it adds: “*virtus ista antecedit, comitatur, et subsequitur bona opera*”²¹³ which function pertains only to *gratia operans et cooperans*. The Council cannot be speaking of habitual grace, for that is compatible with venial sin, towards which the grace of Christ in no manner contributes. Now this actual help which flows from Christ into the just, since it is from Christ and ordained to eternal life, is certainly supernatural and calls for a supernatural motive, since the Council says that we merit by “*operibus quae in Deo sunt facta,*”²¹⁴ by which term the same motive is designated as when works are said to be done “*in nomine Christi*,”

²⁰⁹DBU, 809.

²¹⁰Gonet, *op. cit.*, n. CXLIX, p. 88.

²¹¹ DBU, 803.

²¹² DBU, 809.

²¹³ DBU, 809.

²¹⁴ DBU, 809.

that is, from the motive of charity. Therefore the Council terms supernatural works good, but not those performed merely by some acquired virtue. For this reason, Augustine says in his book *De Spiritu et Littera* "The commandment is not kept unless it be done from the love of justice, for there is no good fruit which does not take its rise from the root of charity."²¹⁵

The final argument from the Council of Trent given by Vasquez is that by good works, even though they be not performed from the motive of charity, we make satisfaction; hence the motive of charity is not necessary for meritorious works. John of St. Thomas answers that it is not at all certain that the Council does not require the virtual reference of charity even for satisfaction, since it says that by such works we are made conformable to Christ, which is not effected without charity. However, conceding for the moment that the motive of charity is not needed for satisfaction, it does not follow that such a motive is not required for merit. For merit demands "*primo et per se*" not the dissolution of the penalty as does satisfaction, but rather submission to God freely given through a good act which must therefore proceed from the due end, which is to say, from charity.²¹⁶

Concerning the confirmatory arguments adduced by the Thomists from the Council of Trent, we offer the following critical comments.

As we have seen, the Thomistic commentators lean heavily on the Tridentine phrase "*operibus quae in Deo sunt facta*" to prove that at least the virtual reference of charity is required for merit. For according to them, this phrase is equivalent to the Scriptural admonition to do works "*in nomine Christi*." From this very fact we may argue that the Tridentine expression has no more value than the Scriptural phrase to which the Thomists liken it. And we have seen that there is no necessity to conclude from this scriptural terminology and other usages similar to it, that the virtual reference of charity is required for merit.

²¹⁵ John of St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, n. XII, pp. 915, 916.

²¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, n. XVI, p. 916.

Even the argument from the words of the Council for the necessity of some supernatural motive known by faith in order that our works may be meritorious, though stronger perhaps than that advanced for the necessity of the virtual reference of charity, is not itself a necessary deduction. John of St. Thomas argues from the fact that a *supernatural grace* is required for a meritorious work to the necessity of a *supernatural motive*, since the Council uses the expression "*operibus quae in Deo sunt facta.*" To say simply that because a supernatural grace is required a supernatural motive is also required, is to presume that every meritorious work must be done from a supernatural motive: it would seem to be a *petitio principii*, for that is the very point that Vasquez denies. Further, to look to the Tridentine phrase "*operibus quae in Deo sunt facta*" as verifying such a conclusion, and as specifying the supernatural motive as virtual charity, is to go beyond the necessary meaning of the equivalent Scriptural passage. Finally, it does not seem to take into consideration the history behind the phrasing of the decree.

One of the very latest drafts of the counciliar decree prior to its definitive form reads as follows.

Nihil ipsis justicatis amplius deesse dicendum est quominus plene (dummodo eo caritatis affectu qui in hujus vitae mortalis cursu requiritur operati fuerint) divinae legi satisfecisse ac, velut undique divina gratia irrorati, aeternam vitam promeruisse censeantur.

The text quoted was presented to the Fathers of the Council on the fifth of November. Notice particularly the phrase "*dummodo eo caritatis affectu qui in hujus vitae mortalis cursu requiritur operati fuerint,*" which certainly seems to indicate that some affection of charity is necessary in order that our works may be meritorious. However, after discussion, this draft was modified, and the following version was presented to the assembled counciliar Fathers on December fourteenth.

Nihil in ipsis justicatis amplius deesse dicendum est quominus plene, quoad illa opera, quae eo caritatis affectu operati fuerint quem divina benignitas requirit, divinae legi satisfecisse ac, velut undique divina gratia

irrorati, aeternam vitam suo tempore, nisi a gratia ceciderint, consequendam promeruisse censeantur.

This draft immediately preceded the definitive decree as we now have it. Although there is a slight change in terminology, it still appears evident that the Council required some affection of charity in our acts in order that they may be meritorious. Cardinal Joen, however, could not submit to this, for, he said, "*tantillum gratiae sufficit ad vitam aeternam.*" Though most of the Fathers were willing to accept the version as given, the Cardinal rallied enough supporters to effect a change by which the phrase "*quae eo caritatis affectu operati fuerint quem divina benignitas requirit*" was modified to "*operibus quae in Deo sunt facta*"²¹⁷ of our present definitive decree.²¹⁸

It is evident therefore that even the Fathers of the Council were not agreed as to whether or not works must be done from some affection of charity in order that they may be meritorious. Both sides had strong supporters; since they could not agree, they used the non-committal phrase "*quae in Deo sunt facta.*" The only thing these words tell us for certain, in view of the history of this decree, is that the Conciliar Fathers did not choose to accept one theological opinion in preference to another. It made clear the dogmatic truth involved; it left the theological difficulty an open question for argument.

In summary we may say that the confirmatory arguments from Scripture and the Council of Trent presented by the Thomistic commentators in favor of teaching of St. Thomas are not convincing in themselves. However, if by reason of a study based on philosophical principles, one is predisposed to think that at least a virtual reference of charity is required for merit, then it will be easy for him to see in these various quotations from the Scripture and the Council the necessity for such a reference. But an objective examination of these Scriptural texts and the Conciliar decree leave one convinced that while they may be interpreted in conformity with such a requisite, the inference that they

²¹⁷ Rivièvre, J., "Merite au Concile de Trente: Reduction du Decret," *DThC*, X cols. 752-753.

²¹⁸ DBU, 809.

actually refer to the Thomistic view is neither readily apparent, nor a necessary one.

C. Reply to the Arguments From Reason

The arguments from reason alleged by Vasquez or Suarez to substantiate their respective positions are the following: 1) If the virtual reference of charity is required for merit, either merit comes entirely from charity and in no way is to be predicated of the good acts of the other virtues; or charity is required only as a condition *sine qua non*; 2) The reference to the end arising from a single elicited act of charity cannot perdure effectively for all the works to be performed during one's life; 3) If the virtual reference of charity is required for merit, then acts of faith and hope would be frequently non-meritorious, for it often happens that these acts do not proceed from the virtual reference of charity; 4) The supernatural infused virtues are intrinsically supernatural; they come from God and are ordained to God; hence, nothing more is needed that they may attain the ultimate end meritoriously than an actual grace which, *de facto*, is always given; 5) The acquired virtues, if done from a motive of faith, and with an actual grace, will be meritorious; 6) If the virtual intention and reference of charity is required for merit, it cannot be explained how a man justified by attrition and the Sacrament of Penance can elicit meritorious acts, before he has elicited an act of charity.

1. Reply to the First Objection

It is indeed true that all merit does belong essentially and formally to the initial formal act of charity in the sense that unless charity commanded the acts of the other virtues, they could not be meritorious. But it does not follow from this, granted the reference to the end given by the initial formal act of charity, that the acts of the other virtues commanded by virtual charity do not have a merit distinct from that of the initial formal act of charity commanding. Put in the form of an example, the case is this. Under the immediate command of virtual charity a man makes an act of humility. Does that act

of humility commanded immediately by virtual charity receive a reward distinct from the reward of the formal act of charity which commanded it initially? Or is merit due only to the initial formal act of charity commanding the act of humility immediately through virtual charity? The Salmanticenses claim that besides the goodness of the initial formal act of charity ordaining the act of humility to the ultimate end *mediately* through virtual charity, there is also the distinct goodness of the act of humility *immediately* ordained to the ultimate end by virtual charity, so that both are deserving of merit. The reason is that there are two distinct goodnesses, and two distinct references to the ultimate end, although the one is always dependent on, and subservient to the other.

That the act of humility, for example, immediately commanded by virtual charity has a goodness distinct from the goodness of the formal act of charity initially commanding is commonly admitted. Let us now show that it has also a reference to the end distinct from that given by the formal act of charity initially commanding.

The reference to the final end by which the initial act of charity commanding is referred to the *finis ultimus* is always a *formal actual* reference; for this reference is the very essence of such an act which is itself the formal, actual, and express love of that end. However, the reference which refers to the end an act of humility performed after the formal actual act of initial charity has been elicited, is often only virtual. And this reference is, as we have seen, a *participation* of formal charity. Now that which is formal *per essentiam*, the very formal, actual act of charity, and that which is formal *per participationem* or virtually such, the act commanded immediately by virtual charity, are necessarily distinct. Hence, it would not be correct to say simply that merit depends totally on the act of charity. True, the acts of the other virtues, in order that they may be meritorious, always suppose the formal actual act of charity initially commanding them, but even as commanded immediately by virtual charity by which they are here and now referred to the ultimate end, they have a merit distinct from the formal, actual act of charity which imprinted this participation of itself upon the in-

ferior virtues in its initial act.²¹⁹

Further, a reference which is numerically the same cannot be intrinsically in two distinct acts. But the reference which ordinates the very act of charity to the final end, and the reference which ordinates the act of some virtue commanded by charity to the final end, is intrinsic to both the initial act of charity and to the act of the virtue immediately commanded by virtual charity. In the case of the formal initial act of charity, this reference is *essentially* an act of charity; in the case of the virtue commanded by virtual charity, the reference to the ultimate end while intrinsic to the virtue commanded, is not the very essence of the *act*, but is part of the essence of the *meritorious manner of acting*. Hence, since the reference which ordinates the formal act of charity to the final end, and the reference which ordinates the act of a virtue commanded immediately by virtual charity to the final end are both intrinsic to two different acts, they cannot be numerically the same thing. Therefore they constitute two distinct references, and hence two distinct sources of merit.²²⁰

We may therefore concede to Vasquez that no act of any virtue can be meritorious unless it be referred to the ultimate end by the initial act of charity. Given this reference to the ultimate end by initial charity, the acts of these virtues immediately commanded by virtual charity, have the power of meriting distinct from the formal act of charity itself, although they always suppose it as an essential condition for merit.

2. Reply to the Second Objection

The objection that the causal effectiveness of a single act of charity elicited early in life could not possibly perdure throughout a lifetime has been placed by Vasquez, Suarez and by many of the followers of St. Bonaventure, some of whom are Thomists, as we have seen. We shall now give the Thomistic reply to all of those, who for one reason or another, require that the formal

²¹⁹ Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, tr. 16, disp. 4, dub. 2, n. 22, p. 729. Cf. John of St. Thomas, *In II-II*, q. 24, disp. 15, a. 3.

²²⁰ *Ibid.* Cf. *op. cit.*, nn. 23-25, pp. 729, 730 for confirmatory arguments.

act of charity be repeated from time to time in order that our actions be meritorious.

Before attempting to show that the virtual reference of charity can be the real cause of the ordination to the ultimate end, it is well to point out that some authors who object against the sufficiency of the virtual reference to perdure effectively for a lifetime, if it proceed from but a single act of charity, admit that this virtual reference is efficacious for a time. As the Salmanticenses say, if such a reference is efficacious for a day, why not for a month, and if for a month, why not for a year, and if for a year, why not for a lifetime? What intrinsic reason is there which would hinder the virtual reference of charity from being efficacious throughout an indefinite period?²²¹

The basis of the objection to our view seems to be this. Once the formal act of charity has been placed, there seems to be nothing which would actually refer the subsequent acts of virtue to the ultimate end from a motive of charity.

The Salmanticenses answer as follows. It is true that the formal act of charity does transpire quickly. And since the actual reference of charity is essentially the same thing as the elicited act of charity, it follows that this formal actual reference also quickly passes, and *de facto*, is effective only concomitantly with the very act of charity. However, as we have discussed at length in our chapter on charity as the intrinsic and effective form of the virtues, by that very act of charity there is imprinted in the very habits of virtue a form which is an effective participation of charity: what we have termed the intrinsic effective form, and what St. Thomas speaks of as the intention of the final end remaining in the secondary ends. Hence, we may say that the act of charity does indeed quickly pass away as regards its formal actuality, but through the medium of the effective form which it imprints on the other habits of virtue (a participation and prolongation of its formal actuality) it remains virtually, or *in virtute*.²²²

²²¹ *Op. cit.*, n. 80, p. 760.

²²² *Op. cit.*, n. 92, p. 765.

Nor can it be objected that this *virtus* left in the virtues by reason of the formal act of charity is merely habitual and hence can be used or not by the will, as it pleases. For the axiom that "*habitibus utimur quando volumus*" is indeed true of habits but not of modes. And the *virtus* left in the virtues subject to the will informed by charity is not a habit but a mode modifying a habit and its acts. And no one can use a habit without at the same time using the mode by which that habit is intrinsically modified. Hence, that the mode of charity imprinted on all the virtues by the very first act of charity be effective, nothing more is required than that the will use itself, or the virtues subject to it, well; that is, the act proceeding from the will must have no inordinateness in it, as would constitute that action at least a venial sin.²²³

We may admit that charity as the effective form of the virtues is indeed an habitual mode in the sense that it is a *permanent* modification of the habits and acts of virtue subject to the will, but not in the sense that it excludes even virtually the actuality proper to *actus secundi*. For, as we have shown in our chapter dealing with charity as the form of the virtues, charity is said to be the form of the virtues not only because it bestows upon inferior habits of virtue a participation in the perfection of the very habit of charity, but also because it gives to these virtues a participation in the very perfection of the act of charity, in which sense charity was spoken of as the effective form of the virtues. For this reason, the *virtus* imprinted on the inferior virtues by the very first act of charity may itself be termed at least virtually an *actus secundus*. Hence, when the inferior virtues thus perfected by the effective form impressed upon them by the initial act of charity commanding, themselves go into act, the habits of inferior virtue thus perfected are equivalently virtually the habit of charity, and hence elicit acts which, under the command of the effective form, are virtually acts of charity.²²⁴

Therefore, just as the will cannot help but use the reference to the end given when the act of charity ordinates the inferior

²²³ *Op. cit.*, n. 93, p. 765.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

virtues to the end by a reference which is *actual in actu*, so too the will cannot help but use this ordination to the end which is *actual in virtute*, by reason of the effective form which is virtually an act of charity commanding, or as St. Thomas says, the intention of the ultimate end remaining in the secondary ends. Hence, although it is true that the will can use habits as it wills, once the will freely determines to use the habit to which a mode is attached it is not free to use or not use that mode whose nature it is to contain virtually the actuality of *actus secundi*.²²⁵

When we say that the mode of charity permanently impressed on the virtues is a participation in the very act of charity, this must be limited to an habitual participation in the effective power of the act of charity commanding the inferior virtues, not to an habitual participation in the formal act of charity by which it refers its own act to the ultimate end. Hence, we say this permanent mode is not an habitual participation of the formal act of charity by which it ordinates itself to the ultimate end, but an habitual participation in the act of charity by which it effectively ordinates the acts of inferior virtues to the ultimate end. Now this habitual, effective mode, permanently present in the very habits of inferior virtue, impresses upon them a participation in the formal actual ordination of charity to the ultimate end, only when these acts of inferior virtue have been elicited by the specific objects of inferior virtue. Hence, this mode of charity in which the other virtues share is *habitually effective*, but it *formally and actually imprints* upon their *acts* an actual reference to the ultimate end *in virtute*, only *per modum actus* and dependently upon the elicited acts of the inferior virtue.²²⁶

For this reason the Thomists can also say that although the virtual reference of charity is a permanent effective mode existing in all the virtues, it does not follow from this that a person can merit in his sleep, or by doing nothing. For one does not merit by habits, but by what one does. And since this habitual effective form does not imprint upon the acts of the virtues an actual participation in the formal actual reference to the end save when

²²⁵ *Op. cit.*, n. 93, p. 766.

²²⁶ *Op. cit.*, nn. 94, 95, pp. 766, 767.

the acts of the inferior virtues are elicited, no man can merit unless he elicit some act of virtue. Hence, it is impossible to say that the teaching of the Thomists on the nature of the virtual reference of charity would lead to the conclusion that a man could merit even in his sleep, or by doing nothing.

Another serious objection against the efficacy of the virtual reference of charity is the following. No act can tend to the supernatural end unless that end be known. But it often happens that those justified do moral works without thinking of the end, as experience certainly testifies. Therefore these morally good acts do not attain the end, and cannot be meritorious. And if one should answer that it is not necessary to be actually thinking of the ultimate end in performing a morally good act, but that it is sufficient that such an end be virtually known, one could still object. For one cannot have virtual knowledge of the end except through the medium of formal knowledge, which the virtual knowledge of the end would contain at least implicitly and *in confuso*. But it can happen that one performs a good work through the use of the acquired virtues; and hence, without any formal knowledge of the ultimate end, so that a virtual knowledge of that end in the case of the acquired virtues is impossible.

We offer the following reply given by the Salmanticenses. It has already been shown that for merit, it is sufficient that the act of virtue be actually-virtually referred to the ultimate end. And in order that an act be actually-virtually referred to the ultimate end, nothing more is required than the virtual knowledge of that end. And this virtual knowledge of the ultimate end will be present in the just if, in the very first act of responsible reason, he made an act of perfect charity ordaining himself and all his works to God. Through that act some participation of charity was impressed upon all the habits of virtue by which their subsequent acts will be ordained to the ultimate end. It must now be pointed out that the impressed form did not proceed solely from charity, but from faith as well. For the first act of charity performed by a child making his first responsible use of reason presupposed a formal, actual knowledge of the supernatural end.

Hence the form impressed on the virtues is not only virtually the love of God, but likewise virtually the knowledge of God.²²⁷

Now one can have virtual knowledge of an object not only through the medium of a formal act of knowing, but also through the medium of some other act (act of the will) which took its rise from the formal knowledge of such an object, which act of knowledge preceded its own act (act of the will) and this is true even though the present act (act of the will) is not formally knowledge, but rather formally an act of the will. For just as there remains in the act of the intellect the *virtus* and the efficacy of the will, and hence the act of the intellect may be called virtually an act of the will; so too, there can remain in the act of the will the *virtus* and the ordination of the intellect, so that its act can be called virtually intellection. Hence, when a man who has elicited a formal act of charity which presupposed the formal knowledge of the supernatural end, now elicits an act of an acquired virtue, like justice or temperance, through the medium of the judgment of natural prudence, both this judgment of prudence and the act of justice or temperance can be called virtually an act of knowledge of the supernatural end and an act of love of the supernatural end: an act of knowledge of the supernatural end because the act of prudence has impressed upon it the participation in the formal knowledge of the supernatural end: an act of love, because the acts of the inferior virtues have impressed on them a participation in the formal act of charity.²²⁸

Reductively, the Salmanticenses are saying this. The formal knowledge of the supernatural end precedes the formal elicited act of charity. The knowledge of the supernatural end remains virtually in the will perfected by charity. Hence, when the will goes into act executing a formal act of love, such an act of the will is virtually also an act of knowledge of the supernatural end. And since the act of the will imprints a form which is a participation of its own perfection in the acts of inferior virtues, it imprints not only a participation in its own proper perfection which is love, but also a participation of that which it has virtually,

²²⁷ *Op. cit.*, disp. 4, dub. 5, n. 114, p. 774.

²²⁸ *Op. cit.*, pp. 774, 775.

namely, the knowledge of the supernatural end. Therefore, the mode or form of charity impressed on the acts of inferior virtues contains at once a participation in the perfection of the act of faith, and this is virtual knowledge of the supernatural end, and the participation in the formal act of charity, which is a virtual act of love. Therefore, when some acquired virtues goes into act, it acts with the virtual knowledge of the supernatural end, and with the virtual love of the supernatural end. In this way it may be said that the supernatural end is known in acting, even when the action is elicited by an acquired virtue.

This statement remains true, even though the acts performed by the acquired virtues are truly natural *quoad substantiam*. For although natural *quoad substantiam*, these acts are supernatural *quoad modum*, for by reason of the mode impressed upon them from the very first act of charity, they contain virtually the knowledge of the supernatural end, and the love of that end.²²⁹

3. Reply to the Third Objection

From the explanations just given, the answer to the third objection, namely, that we often perform acts of faith and hope without referring them to God from a motive of love, so that if the virtual reference of charity were required for merit these acts would be non-meritorious, is immediately evident. According to the Thomistic concept of the virtual reference of charity, there could not be any act of virtue performed by him who is in the state of grace and who had previously elicited a formal act of charity which would not be ordained to God from a motive of charity with a reference of charity that was actual *in virtute*. Therefore the difficulty envisaged by Vasquez and others could never take place in the Thomistic concept of the virtual reference of charity. The special difficulty presented by the man justified by attrition and the Sacrament will be discussed later.

4. Reply to the Fourth Objection

The fourth objection is posited by Suarez. It states that the

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

supernatural virtues are intrinsically supernatural; that they come from God, and are ordained to God, so that nothing more is needed than they may be referred to the ultimate end in a meritorious manner than an actual grace which, *de facto*, is always given.

It is conceded that the infused virtues are intrinsically supernatural, that they come from God and that they are ordered to God. However, the last statement needs qualification. Because they take their rise from grace, the infused virtues share in the inclination to the supernatural end proper to grace, but as the Angelic Doctor points out, it is also necessary that what is determined to an end should receive that determination *ex intentione finis*, and not merely from the nature tending to the end, otherwise all would happen by chance. Now to intend the end is impossible unless the end is known precisely *sub ratione finis*. Further, the one intending the end must also know the proportion of those things which are *ad finem*. Then he who knows both the end, and those things which are *ad finem*, directs himself and all suitable means to the end *sub ratione finis*.²³⁰

It is evident therefore that while the supernatural, infused virtues, by reason of their nature which is grace, do tend to the supernatural end, this tendency would not be *voluntary* on the part of man, and hence could not be meritorious, unless man knew the end *sub ratione finis*. Now the end *sub ratione finis* in the supernatural order, is God *sub ratione bonitatis*. And this is the proper object of charity. Hence acts of the supernatural infused virtues cannot attain the end *sub ratione finis*, unless it be so known and willed by charity whose proper object it is.

²³⁰ *In III Sent.* dist. 27, q. 1, a. 2, Resp., n. 38: Dicendum quod omne quod consequitur aliquem finem, oportet quod fuerit determinatum aliquo modo ad finem illum; alias non magis in hunc finem quam in alium perveniret. Illa autem determinatio oportet quod proveniat ex intentione finis, non solum ex natura tendente in finem, quia sic omnia essent casu, ut quidam Philosophi posuerunt. Intendere autem finem impossibile est, nisi cognoscatur finis *sub ratione finis*, et proportio eorum quae sunt ad finem in finem ipsum. Cognoscens autem finem, et ea quae sunt ad finem, non solum seipsum in finem dirigit, sed etiam alia, sicut sagittator emittit sagittam ad signum.

Hence an act of charity must necessarily precede the acts of the infused virtues in order that they may attain the end *sub ratione finis*, and become meritorious.

We may put the same argument in slightly different form. We concede that the acts of the supernatural infused virtues are indeed ordinated to the supernatural end materially but not formally, that is, not precisely under the formality of end. Thus the acts of faith are concerned with the end in so far as it is the *Prima Veritas*, and the acts of hope are concerned with the end in so far as it is the *Bonum Possidendum*; the acts of the infused moral virtues are concerned with created good. It is proper to charity alone to attain the *Finis Ultimus* precisely under the formality of end. Hence, it is proper to charity alone to merit. And the other infused virtues, even though intrinsically supernatural, do not merit unless they share in some way the perfection of charity. Hence, in some way the acts of the other virtues must be done from the intention of charity.

5. Reply to the Fifth Objection

Suarez refuses to allow the necessity of the virtual reference of charity even in the case of the acquired moral virtues because, he says, if they are done from a motive of faith, they will be meritorious.

Our reply to the previous objection is sufficient answer to this one. For if the very act of faith aided by an actual grace is not sufficient of itself to be meritorious, since it is not referred to the end precisely under the formality of end, *a fortiori* the acts of the moral virtues done from a motive of faith with the help of an actual grace will not tend to attain the end precisely under the formality of end. Therefore, they too will not be meritorious unless referred to the end formally. And this will require at least the actual-virtual reference of charity, for charity alone looks to the end precisely under the formality of *finis*.

6. Reply to the Sixth Objection

Vasquez, and many after him, have objected against the teaching of St. Thomas because, they say, it is possible for a

man to be justified by attrition and the Sacrament of Penance. Once so justified, it often happens that he performs many good works before eliciting an act of charity. If charity were necessary for merit, it would frequently happen that such good works would go without a reward.

It must be admitted that this is a serious objection against the Thomistic teaching and deserving of more attention than has been accorded it by Thomists generally. Among the classic commentators John of St. Thomas, Gonet, and the Salmanticenses consider it explicitly. Of the three, we think the answer given by John of St. Thomas is more in conformity with the teaching of the Angelic Doctor. He replies as follows.

In arguing against the teaching of Vasquez, our author cites St. Thomas and approves of his teaching that to refer all things virtually to God falls under the precept of charity. Such a reference calls for an intention on the part of the one acting; the habitual reference will not do, for to refer something virtually to God "*est agentis propter finem ordinantis in Deum.*"²³¹ Obviously, John of St. Thomas requires the virtual reference of charity, and ascribes this reference to the agent acting.²³²

Therefore, he concludes that the reference of charity is the formal factor of merit, both for the acts of the acquired virtues and for those of the infused virtues. The only difference is that in the case of the infused virtues the motive of charity is connatural, for since they tend by their nature to the supernatural end, that tendency will be realized either by the very act of charity, or by something which effectively substitutes for it, as the actual-virtual reference of charity. The acquired virtues, however, since in no way supernatural, are not inclined to the supernatural end, so that the whole factor of merit flows from charity in such a way that antecedently to the act of charity merit is not due them either radically or conaturally. Therefore, merit, even accidental merit, belongs to good works only because they proceed from

²³¹ *De Caritate*, q. 1, a. 11, ad 3: . . . sed virtualiter aliquid referre in Deum, est agentis propter finem ordinantis in Deum.

²³² John of St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, n. VII, pp. 913, 914.

charity. This statement seems to be borne out by St. Thomas.²³³ Therefore, we may conclude that every good work has an essential reward from charity; but if any work does not proceed from charity, it has no reward, at least in the way of condign merit.²³⁴ This prefaced, John of St. Thomas answers Vasquez directly and forcefully. If, therefore, a work is not done from charity, it is not defrauded of merit, for no merit is due it.

However, according to the same author, it must not be thought that *commonly* the justified faithful work without the reference of charity. For there is no one, he says, who does not at least virtually wish to refer all his works to God. And for this it is not required that he should know the reference of charity to the final end in some metaphysical manner, but that he should know the precept of loving God above all things . . . which is not unknown to the faithful . . . and knowing this, he knows that all things are to be loved because of God. With this knowledge, and a desire to fulfill this precept, even though it be coupled with a fear of hell, or with an affection for some venial sin, a man will have made an act of charity sufficient to ordinate all subsequent acts to God with an actual-virtual reference of charity.²³⁵ And who shall say that a person who approaches the Sacrament with the requisite conditions for absolution, does not shortly thereafter elicit such an act, especially when one realizes that theol-

²³³ In *IV Sent.*, dist. 49, q. 1, a. 4, sol. 4, ad 3: Quamvis habitus caritatis vel cuiuslibet virtutis non sit meritum cui debeatur praemium; est tamen principium et tota ratio merendi in actu; et ideo secundum ejus diversitatem praemia distinguuntur; quamvis ex ipso genere actus possit aliquis gradus in merendo considerari non respectu praemii essentialis, quod est gaudium de Deo; sed respectu alicujus accidentalis praemii, quod est gaudium de aliquo bono creato.

²³⁴ John of St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, n. XVII, p. 916. Gonet, Contenson, and Billuart in their commentaries on the fourth article of Q. 114, *Summa, I-II*, allow that there is some accidental merit due good actions performed before an elicited act of charity. Cf. John of St. Thomas' comment on meriting congruously by some work which precedes the elicited act of charity. *Op. cit.*, n. XXIV, p. 919.

²³⁵ *Op. cit.*, n. XVIII, p. 917. Cf. Davish, W. M., "St. Thomas on Perfect Contrition and Venial Sins" *Theological Studies*, 8 (1947) 127-135.

ogians commonly admit it is very easy to elicit a perfect act of charity?²³⁶

ARTICLE V

REPLY TO THE VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF ST. THOMAS

Having given our interpretation of the teaching of St. Thomas concerning the reference of charity required for meritorious acts, we shall now attempt to answer those whose interpretation differs from our own. It will not be necessary to take up each opinion separately, nor to discuss each opinion in detail. For it will happen that when one objection is answered, that answer will apply *a fortiori* to another objection.

A. Reply to the Interpretation of the Salmanticenses

Cognizant of the eminent position enjoyed by the Salmanticenses as outstanding Commentators on St. Thomas, it is with some hesitation, and only after mature deliberation that we find ourselves forced to disagree with their interpretation of the teaching of the Angelic Doctor.

First of all, we remark that they themselves thought their interpretation necessary to save the *validity* of his teaching. Secondly, these learned authors are quite hesitant about adducing texts from St. Thomas to justify their interpretation. Thirdly, they stress the point that God *could* supply through the Sacrament of Penance what is ordinarily supplied by the act of charity; nowhere do they say that this is what St. Thomas taught actually took place. All in all, one receives the impression that the Salmanticenses are striving desperately to save the validity of the teaching of St. Thomas in the face of what they consider the otherwise insuperable difficulty offered by Vasquez and his many

²³⁶ Cf. Semple, H. C., *Heaven Open To Souls*, for an impressive list of the theologians who adhere to this view.

followers. Let us now reply to the arguments advanced by the Salmanticenses in favor of their interpretation.

To the statement that because a man is in the state of grace, he possess all the virtues as informed, and therefore even though he has not elicited a formal act of charity, by the very information received from grace and the habit of charity all the acts of virtue proceed from him as informed, and hence are meritorious, we reply as follows.

In this statement the Salmanticenses ignore several important points of Thomistic teaching. First of all, it is true to say that even before the elicited act of charity is placed, the habits of virtue are indeed informed; as is the case of infants, or of those who have not yet come to the use of responsible reason. But such information preceding the formal act of charity arises from grace, the source of the supernatural virtues, as we have seen.²³⁷ The reference to the end which these virtues enjoy thereby is both natural to them and necessary; but it is not *voluntary* and does not attain the end *sub ratione finis*, save when elicited from the intention of the end.²³⁸ Hence, since an act must be voluntary to be meritorious, and since the end *sub ratione finis* is the proper object of charity in which the other virtues cannot share save in so far as they participate in the perfection of charity, it follows that the habits of infused virtues cannot be meritorious unless some act of charity precedes them. This is, of course, even more valid in the case of the acquired virtues which do not have grace as their form *per modum originis*.

The Salmanticenses seek to confirm this opinion, because as they say, no one will deny that the acts of infused virtues are meritorious, even though the act of charity has not preceded. This is indeed a strange statement. John of St. Thomas, whom the Salmanticenses had quoted on previous occasions, does deny it.²³⁹ And Gonet, while admitting the possibility of some accidental merit apart from the act of charity commanding, denies that such an act will have anything of the essential merit of

²³⁷Cf. our text, pp. 104-110.

²³⁸In III Sent. dist. 27, q. 1, a. 2, Resp. n. 38. Quotation *ut supra*.

²³⁹John of St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, n. XVII, p. 916.

eternal reward about it.²⁴⁰ Billuart²⁴¹ and Contenson²⁴² adopt the same view as Gonet. The statement of the Salmanticenses certainly cannot stand as true today.

And when these authors say there is no greater reason for requiring the actual-virtual reference of charity in the case of the acquired virtues, than there is for the infused virtues, and hence no great reason for supposing the antecedent act of charity, they seem to forget the essentially diverse nature of these two types of virtue. For the acquired virtues are essentially natural; the infused virtues essentially supernatural. Hence, the acquired virtues have a natural inclination only to some natural good; the infused virtues, at least in the case of the theological virtues, have a natural inclination to the supernatural last end although, with the exception of charity, not precisely under the formality of end. Therefore, in the case of the supernatural theological virtues at least, the reference from charity is surely connatural, the fulfillment of the tendency to perfection which these habits of virtue have by their very nature. In the instance of the acquired virtues there is no such natural exigency and the virtual reference of charity is not at all connatural to them. All of this is treated at least in outline form by John of St. Thomas²⁴³ and should have been familiar to the Salmanticenses.

Further, when these authors say that a man, in acting, necessarily uses the information of the virtues, even though the act of charity does not precede, they seem to forget what they had taught previously; namely, that an act of a virtue subject to charity cannot help but be referred to the ultimate end because in that very habit of virtue there is an habitual participation in the effective ordinating power of the very act of charity; but such a participation in the effective power of charity is not possessed by the other habits of virtue, unless placed there by a formal act of charity.

²⁴⁰ Gonet, *op. cit.*, tr. 9, disp. 2, a. 6, n. 167, p. 93.

²⁴¹ Billuart, F. C. R., *Summa Sancti Thomae*, III, dissert. 8, a. 4.

²⁴² Contenson, V., *Theologia Mentis et Cordis*, II, lib. 7, dissert. 5, cap. 2, p. 428.

²⁴³ John of St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, q. 114, disp. 30, a. 1, n. XVII, pp. 916, 917.

Therefore the information which is necessarily found in the habits and acts of virtue antecedently to an act of charity, is the information and the tendency to the supernatural end which comes from grace. But such information and such a tendency to the ultimate end cannot be sufficient for merit because connatural and necessary; and finally, because there is lacking the formality of the ultimate end which can only come from the act of charity commanding.

The other confirmatory argument alleged by the Salmanticenses is that if one required absolutely that an elicited act of charity precede the acts of the other virtues in order that they may be meritorious, it would happen that many persons justified through attrition and Penance would die before eliciting such an act. Therefore, they would receive heaven not as a reward, but as an inheritance; and this theologians commonly deny.

First of all, let us answer that we cannot admit that *many* persons do die before eliciting such an act of charity. When one considers the relative ease with which an act of charity is elicited, it is difficult to see how these authors can maintain such a position. Surely, most people live quite some time after being justified by the Sacrament; we ourselves feel with many modern authors writing on this matter, that prompted by their desire to serve God better, these people, even very shortly after their confession do elicit an act of charity which, while perhaps very imperfect *intensive*, is none-the-less a true act of charity *appreciative* in that it is made out of that love of God which inclines them to wish sincerely to avoid mortal sin. If they have this minimum of charity, they have elicited an act of charity sufficient to ordinate themselves and all subsequent works to God from a motive of charity. Would the Salmanticenses seriously maintain that such an act is not commonly made by the faithful?

Further, even granting that in a rare case this could happen, as perhaps in the instance of a dying man who passes away shortly after making his confession, is it true to say that such a person receives heaven only as an inheritance, and not as a reward? Do not the Salmanticenses and the theologians rather generally teach the reviviscence of merits? And if St. Thomas teaches, as he does, that in the very first act of responsible reason

a man must make an act of charity or commit a mortal sin, is it not reasonable to suppose that he who has made such an act has at least some meritorious works to his credit which would revive? And surely the Salmanticenses will not claim that most of the faithful at least, fail to make this act of charity and hence fall into mortal sin at the very beginning of their rational life. Now if these merits revive, can not such a one be said to merit heaven in view of past meritorious actions whose merit now revives even though after falling into mortal sin, he died justified by the Sacrament before eliciting an act of charity? Such a person would seem to receive heaven as a reward in view of past merits. It must be admitted that the Salmanticenses themselves seem to envisage such a possibility.²⁴⁴

The remainder of the presentation by the Salmanticenses, as the reader has observed, is confined to an explanation of how the Sacrament of Penance could supply the virtual reference of charity ordinarily supplied by the act of charity. To this argument that God could so supply through the Sacrament, we say simply: *transeat*. We are not here concerned with what could happen, but with the teaching of St. Thomas.

For the reasons given, the interpretation given by the Salmanticenses to the doctrine of St. Thomas does not appear to be correct. It seems to be primarily an attempt to escape a difficulty and not a forthright attempt to determine the exact teaching of the Angelic Doctor.

B. Reply to the Interpretation of Vermeersch

We have seen that some formal act of charity is required for merit, so that a man is obliged at some time to ordain himself and everything that is his to the ultimate end. When must such an ordination be made? St. Thomas is clear in stating that the first deliberate act of him who is still in original sin must be either an act of charity, or a mortal sin.

But when he shall begin to have the use of reason, he is not at all excused from the fault of venial and mortal

²⁴⁴ Collegii Salmanticensis, *op. cit.*, tr. 16, disp. 4, dub. 6, n. 120, p. 777.

sin; but the first thing which then occurs to man to think about, is to deliberate concerning himself. And if he shall ordain himself to the due end, through grace there follows the remission of original sin; if he does not ordain himself to the due end, according as in such an age he is capable of discretion, he will sin mortally, not doing what was possible for him to do . . .²⁴⁵

At least seven times more in the course of his writings does St. Thomas repeat this teaching.²⁴⁶ Surely a statement so frequently re-iterated must be more than accidental to the whole system of Thomistic thought.

Still, it must be admitted, as Veermersch has pointed out, that in each of these quotations, St. Thomas does envisage a man who is still burdened with original sin. It is certainly Thomistic teaching therefore, that a person in original sin must, when first coming to the use of responsible or right reason, either make an act of charity or commit a mortal sin. Does the fact that some, and even many people, come to the use of reason with the habit of sanctifying grace essentially alter the case?

St. Thomas teaches that human acts are moral acts in so far as they proceed from reason.²⁴⁷ Hence, all human acts are moral acts.²⁴⁸ Now every act proceeding from deliberate reason is either ordained to the due end or it is not. If it is, it is a morally good

²⁴⁵ *I-II*, q. 89, a. 6, corp: . . . Cum vero usum rationis habere incooperit, non omnino excusatur a culpa venialis et mortalis peccati; sed primum quod tunc homini cogitandum occurrit, est deliberare de se ipso. Et si quidem seipsum ordinaverit ad debitum finem, per gratiam consequetur remissionem originalis peccati; si vero non ordinet seipsum ad debitum finem, secundum quod in illa aetate est capax discretionis, peccabit mortaliter, non faciens quod in se est . . .

²⁴⁶ Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 24, a. 12, ad 2: q. 28, a. 3, ad 4. *De Malo*, q. 5, a. 2, ad 8: q. 7, a. 10, ad. 8. *In II Sent.* dist. 28, q. 1, a. 3, ad 5: dist. 42, q. 1, a. 5, ad 7. *In IV Sent.* dist. 45, q. 1, a. 3, ad 6. Cf. also, Rohmer, J., *La Finalité Morale Ch es Les Th ologiens De Saint Augustin A. Duns Soot* (Etudes De Philosophie M di ale) XXVII, pp. 126, 127.

²⁴⁷ *I-II*, q. 18, a. 5, corp . . . Dicuntur autem aliqui actus humani vel morales, secundum quod sunt a ratione. Cf. *I-II*, q. 1, a. 3, corp.

²⁴⁸ *I-II*, q. 1, a. 3, corp. in fine: . . . actus morales proprie speciem sortiuntur ex fine; nam idem sunt actus morales et actus humani.

act; if it is not, it is a morally bad act. There cannot be an indifferent moral act proceeding from deliberate reason.²⁴⁹ We may conclude therefore that the first act proceeding from the deliberate reason of the child is either morally good or morally bad, according as it is, or is not ordinated to the due end.

The due end is the ultimate end which so satisfies the appetite that nothing beyond it is sought.²⁵⁰ Now this ultimate end is God.²⁵¹ Although the ultimate end in some manner is necessarily sought in every act of the will,²⁵² no act of the will can be morally good unless God is explicitly sought actually or habitually.²⁵³

It is indeed true that every creature, even irrational creatures, seek God *implicitly*, that is, in so far as the secundary end is not sought except through the *virtus* of the principal end which exists in the secundary end. And this *virtus* of the principal end exists in the secundary end because they are ordered to the final end (by God), or because they have some likeness of the final

²⁴⁹ *I-II*, q. 18, a. 9, corp: . . . Unde necesse est omnem actum hominis a deliberativa ratione procedentem, in individuo consideratum, bonum esse vel malum. Cf. *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, Sol. in med.

²⁵⁰ *I-II*, q. 1, a. 5, corp: . . . Oportet igitur quod ultimus finis ita impleat totum hominis appetitum, quod nihil extra ipsum appetendum relinquatur.

²⁵¹ *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 2, corp.

²⁵² *I-II*, q. 1, a. 6, corp: Necessae est quod omnia quae homo appetit, appetat propter ultimum finem; et hoc appareat dupli ratione.—Primo quidem quia quidquid homo appetit, appetit sub ratione boni; quod quidem si non appetitur ut bonum perfectum, quod est ultimus finis, necesse est ut appetatur ut tendens in bonum perfectum; quia semper inchoatio alicujus ordinatur ad consummationem ipsius, sicut patet tam in his quae fiunt a natura, quam in his quae fiunt ab arte; et ita omnis inchoatio perfectionis ordinatur in perfectionem consummatam, quae est per ultimum finem. —Secundo quia ultimus finis hoc modo se habet in movendo appetitum, sicut se habet in aliis motionibus primum movens. Manifestum est autem quod causae secundae moventes non movent, nisi secundum quod moventur a primo movente; unde secunda appetibilia non movent appetitum nisi in ordine ad primum appetibile, quod est ultimus finis.

²⁵³ *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 2, corp: . . . Et sicut in demonstrativis scientiis non recte sumitur conclusio nisi per resolutionem in prima principia; ita appetitus creaturae rationalis non est rectus nisi per appetitum explicitum ipsius Dei, actu vel habitu.

end in themselves. But such a seeking after the final end is necessary; at no time does it suppose either a conscious knowledge of the final end, nor a conscious willing of that end. To seek God knowingly and willingly; that is, *explicitly*, belongs only to a rational nature which alone can consciously refer these secondary ends to God. For this reason St. Thomas says that the appetite of a rational creature is not right unless he *explicitly*, that is, with knowledge and volition, seeks God *actu vel habitu*.²⁵⁴ Now we know what St. Thomas means by seeking God *actu*: we must be actually thinking of God while acting. The expression to seek God *explicitly in habitu*, seems to refer to the explicit actual seeking of God remaining virtually in the seeking of anything whatsoever. We conclude this especially from the following passage of the *Summa* where St. Thomas is discussing this same matter.

It is not necessary that one be always thinking of the ultimate end whenever he is seeking something, or is acting, but the *virtus of the first intention which looks to the final end remains in any appetite of anything whatsoever*, even though one is not actually thinking of the ultimate end.²⁵⁵

Therefore, we may conclude that in order that the secondary ends sought may be good, the ultimate end which is God must be explicitly willed actually or habitually. And since the first act proceeding from the deliberate will of the child must be either morally good or morally bad, precisely because it proceeds from a deliberate will, in that first moral act the child must be concerned with the ultimate end which is God.²⁵⁶

Consequently, if the child in its first moral act explicitly and actually wills the true final end which is God, he performs an act of charity; for in virtue of such an act he ordinates himself

²⁵⁴ In III Sent. dist. 27, q. 1, a. 2, Resp., n. 38. Quotation *ut supra*.

²⁵⁵ I-II, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3: Non oporteat ut semper aliquis cogitet de ultimo fine, quandocumque aliquid appetit, vel operatur, sed virtus primae intentionis, quae est respectu ultimi finis manet in quolibet appetitu cuiuscumque rei; etiamsi de ultimo fine actu non cogitetur.

²⁵⁶ I-II, q. 89, a. 6, corp. Cf. Quotation *ut supra*.

and all that he does to true beatitude, and in all subsequent actions seeks God explicitly *in habitu* (virtually); if he rejects the true final end in favor of an apparent final end, he commits a mortal sin, because, rejecting the true final end, he embraces an apparent end which is necessarily a complete aversion from God and conversion to creatures. Such an act is necessarily either a mortal sin or an act of charity, because the first perfect moral act of the child is necessarily concerned with the final end as such. According to the metaphysical principles which are given by St. Thomas, and become operative in the psychological order when the child first elicits a deliberate, responsible act, there is no other choice possible.

Some commentators, in view of the psychological immaturity of the child, have been content to require only a virtual and implicit willing of the final end in the first moral act. We may well ask how something can be virtual and implicit unless there has first been an act which is actual and explicit? Be that as it may, whatever be thought of their opinion, it does not seem to be the teaching of St. Thomas.²⁵⁷

In view of the principles just outlined, it seems evident that what St. Thomas taught concerning the necessity of making an act of charity when first coming to the use of reason, a necessity he consistently imposes upon the child still in original sin, was merely an application of broader metaphysical and psychological exigencies. These principles impose the same necessity upon the child who is baptized, and who is now about to place its first act of deliberate reason.

We feel obliged therefore to reject the view of Vermeersch and Billot. It would seem that not only does St. Thomas require a formal act of charity for merit, but that such an act must be elicited when first coming to the use of responsible or right reason. In virtue of such an act God will be always explicitly sought from a motive of charity.

The texts in St. Thomas to which this author appeals will be discussed when we reply to the interpretation of Ballerini.

²⁵⁷ Cf. Rohmer, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 126-127.

C. Reply to the Interpretation of Van Noort and Ballerini

Van Noort appealed to the following quotation from St. Thomas to substantiate his interpretation of the Angelic Doctor.

The habitual ordination of an act to God does not at all suffice, for no one merits by reason of what he is habitually, but by reason of what he actually does. Nor is it necessary that an actual intention ordaining to the ultimate end be always conjoined to any action which is directed to some proximate end, but it is sufficient that at some time all those ends be actually referred to the ultimate end, as is done when one thinks to direct his whole self to the love of God; then indeed whatever he ordinates to himself will be ordained to God. And if it is asked when it is necessary to refer to the ultimate end, this is nothing else than to ask when it is necessary for the habit of charity to go into act, because whenever the habit goes into act there is an ordination of the whole man to the ultimate end, and consequently of all those things which are ordained to himself.²⁵⁸

In this passage note the phrase "*aliquando actualiter omnes illi fines in finem ultimum referantur.*" Van Noort translates *aliquando* as meaning *from time to time*, and therefore interprets it to mean "as often as the precept of charity obliges."²⁵⁹ This is a permissible translation, and in accord with the general teach-

²⁵⁸ *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. v, a. 5, ad 6: Non sufficit omnino habitualis ordinatio actus in Deum: quia ex hoc quod est in habitu, nullus meretur, sed ex hoc quod actu operatur. Nec tamen oportet quod intentio actualis ordinans in finem ultimum sit semper conjuncta cuilibet actioni quae dicitur in aliquem finem proximum; sed sufficit quod aliquando actualiter omnes illi fines in finem ultimum referantur, sicut fit quando aliquis cogitat se totum ad Dei dilectionem dirigere; tunc enim quidquid ad seipsum ordinat, in Deum ordinatum erit. Et si quaeratur quando oporteat actum referre in finem ultimum, hoc nihil aliud est quam quaerere quando oportet habitum charitatis exire in actum: quia quandocumque habitus charitatis in actum exit, fit ordinatio totius hominis in finem ultimum, et per consequens omnium eorum quae in ipsum ordinantur ut bona sibi.

²⁵⁹ Van Noort, G., *De Gratia Christi*, p. 199.

ing of St. Thomas provided, however, it be pointed out that the formal act of charity must be repeated not because it is *per se* required for merit, but only *per accidens*, in so far as at various times and for various reasons we are obliged to elicit a formal act of charity.

Although the translation of *aliquando* given by Van Noort is correct, it should be kept in mind that another translation is possible. The term can mean "at some time," so that a single elicited act of charity would satisfy the demands of the term itself.

However, when Van Noort says that the subsequent acts following an elicited act of charity are meritorious even though they no longer proceed from the past act of charity,²⁶⁰ he is certainly at variance with the teaching of the Angelic Doctor. For, as we have shown, St. Thomas insists that secondary ends are referred to the ultimate end precisely because of the *virtus* which remains in the secundary ends from the formal, elicited act of charity.²⁶¹

Ballerini bases his interpretation of St. Thomas particularly on the text from *De Malo* already quoted.²⁶² It appears to us that Ballerini's interpretation, so similar to that of Van Noort, stands refuted by his own presentation of that teaching.

In order to show that the obligation of referring all our good works to God virtually falls under the precept, this author appeals to the treatise *De Caritate* where he finds that to refer all things virtually to God is nothing more than to have God for our ultimate end.

To refer all things virtually to God falls under the precept of charity; since this is nothing else than to have God for the ultimate end.²⁶³

Appealing to a more descriptive passage the author quotes the

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ Cf. our text, pp. 197-200.

²⁶² *De Malo*, q. 9, a. 2. Cf. Ballerini, *op. cit.*, n. 122, p. 115.

²⁶³ *De Caritate*, q. 1, a. 11, ad 3: . . . sed virtualiter referre omnia in Deum, cadit sub praecepto caritatis; cum hoc nihil aliud sit quam habere Deum ultimum finem.

following text from St. Thomas in which he describes the virtual reference.

If, however, it [the saying of the Apostle] is understood affirmatively, this can be in a twofold manner. Either so that the actual reference to God is conjoined to each of our actions, not indeed in act (*actu*) but virtually (*in virtute*) according as the *virtus* of the first ordination remains in all following actions, just as the *virtus* of the ultimate end remains in all ends ordained to it; and so to this extent it is a precept and it happens that its omission is a venial or mortal sin.²⁶⁴

In this quotation which Ballerini himself gives as an interpretation of what St. Thomas means by the virtual reference, the Angelic Doctor explicitly states that it is an *actual* reference of our works to God not in *actu* but *in virtute*. Now it is admitted by all that for an actual reference to God from charity, or from any other motive, there must be some thought of the end in acting. If, as Ballerini supposes, there is no thought of the ultimate end necessary, once the initial act of charity has been made, but that the very habit of charity alone is sufficient, how can such a reference be called actual, even virtually so?

Further, this author has not considered the nature of the *virtus* which is left in our subsequent actions from the first act of charity. St. Thomas explicitly says that this *virtus* is the intention of the principal end which remains virtually in all secondary ends, so that whoever actually intends the secondary end, virtually intends the principal end which is God.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ *In II Sent. dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 7. Quotation ut supra.*

²⁶⁵ *De Caritate, q. 1, a. 11, ad 2: . . . sed quod omnia virtute referantur in Deum, hoc pertinet ad perfectionem caritatis ad quam omnes tenentur. Ad cuius evidentiam considerandum est, quod, sicut in causis efficientibus virtus primae causae manet in omnibus causis sequentibus; ita etiam intentio principalis finis virtute manet in omnibus finibus secundariis; unde quicumque actu intendit aliquem finem secundarium, virtute intendit finem principalem; sicut medicus, dum colligit herbas actu, intendit confidere potionem, nihil fortassis de sanitate cogitans; virtualiter tamen intendit sanitatem, propter quam potionem dat. Sic igitur, cum aliquis se ipsum*

Therefore, when St. Thomas says that it is sufficient that our works performed subsequent to the initial act of charity be virtually referred to God, he is saying equivalently that they are being done from a motive of charity which is actually-virtually intended. It is not correct, therefore, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, to say that after an act of charity has been elicited, then all subsequent acts are referred to God by the very habit of charity. They are referred to God by reason of the intention of the ultimate end which remains in the inferior habits. And this actual-virtual intention, as we have seen at length in answering the objections against the efficacy of the virtual reference, is the virtual knowledge and the virtual love of the supernatural final end.

Further, since the man eliciting the act of charity has ordained himself and all that he will do subsequently to the ultimate end, and since this ordination remains until retracted by mortal sin, the statements made by St. Thomas in *De Malo*²⁶⁶ that any act which is capable of being referred to the end will be actually referred to the end because the mind of the person acting is habitually referred to God as to the end, must be interpreted to mean that the mind of man is habitually referred to the end by reason of the *virtus* which is a permanent participation in the act of charity commanding, implanted in the secundary virtues by the initial act of charity. In the same way are to be interpreted all the other quotations where the Angelic Doctor speaks of the sufficiency of the habitual reference. For in making such statements, he has presupposed what he had already made clear; namely, that the man acting is habitually inclined to ordinate everything to God because of the permanent *virtus* which cannot help but be efficacious once an act of an inferior virtue has been elicited.

That this interpretation of the Angelic Doctor is more reasonable can be substantiated by appealing to parallel passages in the

ordinat in Deum, sicut in finem; in omnibus quae propter se ipsum facit manet virtute intentio ultimi finis, qui Deus est; unde in omnibus mereri potest, si caritatem habeat. Hoc igitur modo Apostolus praecipit quod omnia in Dei gloriam referantur. Cf. our text, pp. 197-200.

²⁶⁶ *De Malo*, q. 9, a. 2. Quotation *ut supra*.

writings of St. Thomas where he treats of the same matter. Thus in his first work he says:

. . . so that the actual reference to God is conjoined to each of our actions, not indeed actually but virtually, according as the *virtus* of the first ordination remains in all following actions.²⁶⁷

And in the brief tract *De Charitate* there is an important passage.

To refer all things actually to God is not possible in this life, just as it is not possible that God be always thought of.²⁶⁸

Here we see clearly that to refer things to God actually means to be thinking of God as the end while acting. The quotation continues thus.

. . . but that all things be virtually referred to God, this pertains to the perfection of charity to which all are bound.²⁶⁹

In this part of the quotation the Angelic Doctor insists we are bound to refer all things virtually to God. We notice that this virtual reference to God is used in contradistinction to the actual reference to God to which we are not bound in each action, since that belongs to the perfection of heaven and is not possible in this life. Now what does he mean by referring all things to God virtually? He tells us immediately.

To appreciate this, it must be considered that just as in efficient causes the *virtus* of the first cause remains in all following causes; so also the intention of the

²⁶⁷ *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 7: . . . ita quod actualis relatio in Deum sit conjuncta actioni nostrae cuilibet, non quidem in actu, sed in virtute, secundum quod virtus primae ordinationis manet in omnibus actionibus sequentibus.

²⁶⁸ *De Caritate*, q. 1, a. 11, ad 2: Omnia actu referre in Deum, non est possibile in hac vita, sicut non est possibile quod semper de Deo cogitetur.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.* Quotation *ut supra*.

principal end remains virtually in all secondary ends; hence, whoever actually intends a secondary end, virtually intends the principal end.²⁷⁰

It must be clear by now that we refer things to God virtually because the intention of the principal end remains in the secundary ends. This by its very nature presupposes some actual intention of the principal end, which is, of course, the act of charity. And it is the intention of the ultimate end remaining in the secondary ends which refers our actions to God. Consequently, whenever we perform some action while actually thinking only of some secundary end, we likewise intend the principal end by reason of the *virtus* which remains in that secondary end from the elicited act of charity. The conclusion to the quotation just given is surely noteworthy.

Therefore, when anyone ordinates himself to God as to the end, in all things which he does for himself, there remains virtually the intention of the ultimate end which is God; hence, in all things he can merit, if he have charity.²⁷¹

Therefore, St. Thomas concludes, when a man has ordained himself to God as to the end, in all things which he does there remains virtually the actual intention of the end, and it is precisely for this reason that he can merit, if he have charity.

Consequently, when he says in *De Malo*,

Because it happens sometimes that a man does not ordain some act to God actually, but since that act of itself contains no inordination by reason of which it may not be referred to God, and since the mind of man is habitually referred to God as to the end, that act will not only not be a sin, but it will be a meritorious act,²⁷²

²⁷⁰ *Ibid. Quotation ut supra.*

²⁷¹ *Ibid. Quotation ut supra. Cf. In II Sent. dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 7. De Virt. q. 2, a. 11, ad 2.*

²⁷² *De Malo*, q. 9, a. 2, corp: . . . quia contingit quandoque quod homo actu non ordinet aliquem actum in Deum, cum tamen actus ille de se non

we may reasonably conclude that he means it is not necessary that we actually think of the final end while acting, because by reason of the first act of charity, man has constituted God as his final end, and has ordinated all his actions to God, and in this sense the mind of man may be said to be habitually referred to God. But, as we have seen, this initial act left in the virtues a participation of itself, which is the very actual-virtual intention of the end. And since this habitual participation of charity is always effective when an act of the inferior virtue is elicited, such an act will always be meritorious in one who has charity.

Hence, it would seem that when St. Thomas says it is sufficient for merit if the mind of man is habitually referred to God, it would be prudent to ask *why*. In asking why, we find immediately that the reason is the actual intention of the final end remaining in the secondary virtues. Therefore, we may conclude there is no contradiction in the statements of St. Thomas where he makes this assertion. It is a question of stating summarily what has already been explained at length, and may now be presupposed.

*D. Reply to the Interpretation of the Followers of
Sts. Bonaventure and Alphonsus*

These authors, who require for one or another reason that the formal act of charity be repeated in order that subsequent acts may be meritorious, consistently appeal to the *Prima Secundae*²⁷³ to prove the necessity of the virtual reference of charity. With that we have no quarrel. But, prescinding from this text, they do not seem to call upon the authority of Thomas to substantiate their version of the virtual reference. The only text which conceivably could support their view is that quoted by Van Noort and already discussed. We saw that it does not apply particularly in view of the body of Thomistic teaching concerning the virtual reference. Further, in delineating our interpretation

contineat aliquam inordinationem, ratione cuius non sit in Deum referibilis; et tamen quia mens hominis est habitualiter relata in Deum sicut in finem, actus ille non solum non est peccatum, sed etiam est actus meritorius.

²⁷³ *I-II*, q. 114, a. 4.

of St. Thomas, we pointed out, and alleged several texts to substantiate the view that the Angelic Doctor does not limit the causal effectiveness of the virtual reference of charity either by reason of time or species of acts.²⁷⁴ We may therefore dismiss this opinion as an interpretation of the teaching of St. Thomas by referring the reader to that discussion, and to the reply to the objections raised by these authors.

*E. Reply to the Interpretations of Suarez, Mazzella,
and the Wirceburgenses*

We notice immediately an essential difference between the interpretation given to St. Thomas by these authors and that of Ballerini and Van Noort. Suarez and his followers deny that St. Thomas taught the necessity of a previously elicited formal act of charity. However, there is one text of St. Thomas which gives them particular difficulty. It is found in the *Summa* and reads as follows.

First of all it must be considered that eternal life consists in the fruition of God. However, the motion of the human mind towards the fruition of the divine good is the proper act of charity, through which all the acts of the other virtues are ordained to this end, according as the other virtues are commanded by charity. And therefore the meriting of eternal life belongs first of all to charity and secondarily to the other virtues according as their acts are commanded by charity.²⁷⁵

Confronted with this text, Suarez argues that here St.

²⁷⁴Cf. our text, p. 200. Cf. *De Caritate*, q. 1, a. 11, ad. 2. *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6. *In II Sent.* dist. 38, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4. *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 7, 11.

²⁷⁵*I-II*, q. 114, a. 4, corp: . . . primo enim considerandum est quod vita aeterna in Dei fruitione consistit. Motus autem humanae mentis ad fruitionem divini boni est proprius actus charitatis, per quem omnes actus aliarum virtutum ordinantur in hunc finem, secundum quod aliae virtutes imperantur a charitate. Et ideo meritum vitae aeternae primo pertinet ad charitatem, ad alias autem virtutes secundario, secundum quod earum actus a charitate imperantur.

Thomas means simply that the work done must in some manner be rooted in charity; and this is effected by the very fact that the work is done from some supernatural motive supplied by faith. No previously elicited act of charity is necessary, nor does St. Thomas intend to teach this here.

The interpretation given by Suarez to this text, ignores the whole body of Thomistic teaching on charity as the effective form. St. Thomas insists that the mere habit of charity is not sufficient for merit, for one merits by what he does, not by what he is.

The habitual reference of an act to God does not at all suffice, for by reason of what one is habitually no one merits, but rather by reason of what one actually does.²⁷⁶

Secondly, if one merited simply because the will was informed by the habit of charity, then even venial sins would be meritorious.

Not every act proceeding from the will informed by charity is meritorious, if one regards the will merely as a potency; otherwise venial sins which those who have charity sometimes commit, would be meritorious.²⁷⁷

Besides the habit of charity, St. Thomas insists that the work be done *ex charitate*.

But it is true that every act which is from charity (*ex charitate*) is meritorious.²⁷⁸

And to show that he is not speaking merely of any supernatural motive, but of the very motive of charity, he adds that the mode of charity falls under the precept.

²⁷⁶ *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6. *Quotation ut supra.*

²⁷⁷ *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 7: Non omnis actus procedens a voluntate informata est meritorius, si voluntas pro potentia accipiatur: alioquin venialia peccata essent meritoria.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid*: Sed verum est quod omnis actus qui est ex caritate, est meritorius.

Whence the mode [of charity] is included under the necessity of the precept, according as the precept is ordinated to attain beatitude.²⁷⁹

Further, in considering the virtual reference to the ultimate end, we saw that St. Thomas requires some previous elicited act of charity by which we ordinated ourselves to God for love of him.

It is sufficient that at some time all those ends are actually referred to the ultimate end; as is done when one thinks to direct his whole self to the love of God.²⁸⁰

For this that the end of any action be God or charity, it is not necessary that in performing that action one think of God or of charity; . . . but it is necessary that first there should have been thought concerning the end which is charity, or God.²⁸¹

That intention and reference to the final end from charity, remains in all subsequent actions,

So therefore, when anyone ordiates himself to God as to the end, in all things which he does for himself, there remains virtually the intention of the ultimate end which is God,²⁸²

provided these subsequent actions are not inordinate.

But it is evident that he who has charity has ordinated himself and all that is his to God . . . Therefore whatever he ordiates either to himself or to something else which is his, he acts meritoriously . . .

²⁷⁹ *Ibid*: Unde modus sub necessitate praecepti includitur, secundum quod praeceptum ordinatur ad consecrationem beatitudinis.

²⁸⁰ *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6. *Quotation ut supra*.

²⁸¹ *In II Sent.* dist. 38, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4: Ad hoc quod alicujus actionis finis sit Deus vel charitas, non oportet quod agendo illam actionem aliquis de Deo vel charitate cogitet; . . . sed oportet quod prius fuerit cogitatio de fine, qui est charitas vel Deus. Cf. *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 11, ad 2. *De Virtutibus in Communi*, q. 2, a. 11, ad 2.

²⁸² *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 11, ad 2. *Quotation ut supra*.

unless he be hindered through inordination in the act, which is not able to be referred to God.²⁸³

Because this intention of charity remains in the secondary ends, those secondary ends are meritorious, even though God or charity are not thought of actually and formally when acting.

. . . so also the intention of the principal end remains virtually in all secondary ends; hence, whoever actually intends a secondary end, virtually intends the principal end; . . . So therefore, when anyone ordinates himself to God as to the end, in all things which he does *proper se ipsum* there remains virtually the intention of the ultimate end which is God; hence, in all things he can merit, if he have charity.²⁸⁴

Hence, when in the *Summa* St. Thomas says that the acts of all the virtues are meritorious because commanded by charity, in view of his teaching on the virtual reference of charity, he must mean that these acts of virtue are meritorious precisely in so far as the intention of the ultimate end which they have in them from a formal act of charity, moves them to the final end for love of that end.

However, Mazzella insists that if we do not admit the interpretation given to St. Thomas by Suarez, then we are obliged to admit the Angelic Doctor contradicted himself. To substantiate this statement, he quotes the following passages which by now must surely be familiar to the reader.

. . . when anyone ordinates himself to God as to the end, in all things which he does for himself, there remains the intention of the ultimate end, which is God; hence, in all things he can merit, if he have charity.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 11: Sed constat quod ille qui habet caritatem, se et omnia sua ordinavit in Deum, cui inhaeret ut ultimo fini. Ergo quidquid ordinat vel ad se vel ad quocumque aliud sui, meritorie agit, etiam si actu de Deo non cogitet; nisi impediatur per aliquam inordinationem actus, qui non sit referibilis in Deum. Cf. *Op. cit.*, loc. cit., ad 7.

²⁸⁴ *De Charitate*, q. 1, a. 11, ad 2. *Quotation ut supra*. Cf. *In II Sent. dist. 40*, q. 1, a. 5, corp.

²⁸⁵ *Op. cit.*, q. 1, a. 11, ad 2. *Quotation ut supra*.

It happens sometimes that a man does not ordinate actually each act to God, since however, the act of itself does not contain any inordination by reason of which it may not be referred to God; and since the mind of man is habitually referred to God as to the end, that act not only is not a sin, but is indeed a meritorious act.²⁸⁶

Although he himself does not tell us just wherein the contradiction supposedly existing between these two texts lies, it must be that he interprets the text from *De Charitate* to demand some previous elicited act of charity in virtue of which all other acts are meritorious. Whereas, in the text from *De Malo*, according to him, St. Thomas would be teaching that even though a man doesn't actually ordain each act to God, that act will none-the-less be meritorious, because the mind of man is habitually referred to God. And according to Mazzella²⁸⁷ the mind of man, to be habitually referred to God, means nothing more than that man is in the state of grace.

Mazzella's interpretation of the text from *De Charitate*, as it appears to us at least, is in accord with the teaching of St. Thomas and may be readily admitted. He can see in the text from *De Malo* a contradiction to its teaching because he has failed to understand what St. Thomas means when he says that it can happen that a man does not actually ordain every action to God, and still these acts can be meritorious because the mind of man is habitually referred to God.

We have already pointed out in replying to the interpretation given St. Thomas by Ballerini that the phrase "the mind of man is habitually referred to God" is perfectly compatible with the actual-virtual reference from charity. It is perfectly true to say that the mind of man is *habitually* referred to the ultimate end because of the permanent actual-virtual participation of the formal act of charity remaining in all the secondary ends, which habitual participation is always effective when an act of the inferior virtues is elicited. There is no contradiction here; we

²⁸⁶ *De Malo*, q. 9, a. 2. *Quotation ut supra.*

²⁸⁷ *De Virtutibus Infusis*, n. 1350, pp. 763, 764. Cf our text, pp. 178-179.

repeat it is merely a case of a succinct statement, which presupposes what has been oft repeated and insisted on, that the mind of man is habitually referred to the ultimate end because an act of charity has preceded and has left within the virtues an habitual form which constantly tends to refer all the acts of man to the ultimate end from the motive of charity.

Further, St. Thomas has at least twice²⁸⁸ said that the habitual reference of charity is not sufficient for merit. These statements, coupled with the fact that he insists the rectitude of the end is conserved in all the secondary ends once an act of charity has been elicited, and that the final end is always intended with an intention and reference which is actual *in virtute*, make it reasonable to interpret the phrase "habitually referred to God" as meaning the same thing as the actual-virtual reference of secondary ends from the motive of charity.

Apropos this same text of the *Summa* now under discussion, the Wirceburgenses interpret St. Thomas as teaching that merit does indeed belong primarily and intrinsically to the act of charity commanding the other virtues, and to the virtues commanded only secondarily and *denominative*; but this does not prevent these virtues commanded by charity to have a merit which is *per se* and specifically their own, nor does it hinder these virtues even though not commanded by charity from having a merit which is proper to them.²⁸⁹

We admit the validity of this interpretation of Thomas save for the last phrase: "nor does it hinder these virtues even though not commanded by charity from having a merit which is proper to them."

In the light of the teaching of St. Thomas as we understand it, such an interpretation does not seem accurate. As we have seen both in our presentation of the teaching of the Angelic Doctor and in our replies to various objections, St. Thomas explicitly demands that the work done be performed *ex caritate*,²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ Cf. *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6. *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 7. Confer also our text, pp. 192-194.

²⁸⁹ Kilber, H. *De Virtutibus Theologiciis* (*Theologia Dogmatica Wirceburgensis VIII*) n. 310, p. 275.

²⁹⁰ *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 7. Cf. our text, p. 193.

if it is to be meritorious, and even insists that the very mode of charity falls under the precept,²⁹¹ not that the motive of charity must be intended actually in every act,²⁹² but it must be intended actually-virtually.²⁹³ Further, he insists that once the act of charity has been elicited, every act that is not inordinate is *de facto* done from a motive of charity precisely because the intention of the ultimate end remains in the secondary ends.²⁹⁴ Hence, not only is the motive of charity at least virtually intended necessary in every act of one having grace, but unless the act performed be a venial sin, that motive will always be intended.²⁹⁵ The only exception is the act which is inordinate.²⁹⁶

Therefore, when it is said that the works commanded by charity have a merit which is specifically their own, this must be understood to mean that they have such merit only because the intention of the ultimate end placed in them by a formal act of charity ordinates these secondary ends to the ultimate end from the motive of charity. Therefore, the merit due to these acts of virtue commanded by charity is theirs precisely in so far as the *virtus* of the initial act of charity commanding remains in them. Without this *virtus* of charity, these acts could never attain the ultimate end *sub ratione finis*, and hence could never be meritorious. Granted this *virtus* which is an habitual effective participation in the formal act of charity commanding, or the actual intention of the ultimate end remaining *in virtute*, then it may be said that they have a merit distinct from the merit due the initial formal act of charity commanding, but always dependent upon it, that they may have any merit at all. Throughout this reply, we are, of course, speaking of condign merit, for as we have seen, it may be admitted that these acts of the inferior virtues even though not commanded by charity, may have that

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 11. *De Caritate*, q. 1, a. 11, ad 2. In *II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6.

²⁹³ Cf. *In II Sent.* dist. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6; dist. 38, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4. *De Caritate*, q. 1, a. 11, ad 2. Confer also, our text, pp. 196-200.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 11. Cf. *Op. cit.*, loc. cit., ad 7.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

congruous merit which is given through the sheer liberality of God.

To confirm our interpretation of the Angelic Doctor on this point, we may with advantage quote again a passage used much earlier in our study.

Hence, it cannot be that any habit existing in some faculty of the soul should have the nature of virtue, speaking of meritorious virtues, about which we are here speaking, unless in this way, that in that faculty there is some participation of the perfection of the will which charity perfects. Therefore, charity is the form of the other virtues, just as prudence is the form of the moral virtues. And this is one way in which charity is the form of the other virtues. The other two ways may be drawn from this, that it is the motor and the end in so far as the one moving places its motion (mode) in the instrument, and those things which are *ad finem* are directed by reason of the end. And so the mode of charity is participated in by the other virtues in so far as they are moved by charity, and in so far as they are ordained to it, as to the end.²⁹⁷

From this passage it is apparent that virtues are not meritorious except in so far as they participate in the perfection of charity. One way in which they participate in the perfection of charity is that they are moved by charity. And they are moved by charity in that the act of charity places its motion to the end in those virtues which are *ad finem*, so that they are moved by reason of the end of charity. And this motion which charity

²⁹⁷ *In III Sent.* dist. 27, q. 2, a. 4, Sol. 3: . . . Unde non potest esse quod aliquis habitus existens in aliqua potentia animae habeat rationem virtutis loquendo de virtutibus meritoriis, de quibus hic loquimur, nisi secundum hoc quod in illa potentia participatur aliquid de perfectione voluntatis quam caritas perficit.

Et ideo caritas est forma aliarum virtutum omnium, sicut prudentia moralium. Et hic est unus modus quo caritas est forma aliarum virtutum. Alii autem duo modi possunt accipi ex hoc quod ipsa est motor et finis, inquantum movens ponit modum (Ed. motum) suum in instrumento, et ea quae sunt ad finem diriguntur ex ratione finis. Et ita modus caritatis participatur in aliis virtutibus, inquantum moventur a caritate, et inquantum ordinantur in ipsam sicut in finem.

places in the virtues is the actual reference *in virtute*, as we have seen in presenting the doctrine of St. Thomas.²⁹⁸ Therefore, it appears that without this command from the act of charity moving the virtues through the *virtus* which it places in them, there could not be a meritorious act. Hence, we conclude that according to the teaching of St. Thomas the acts of the inferior virtues may not be allowed a merit which is specifically their own independently of at least the actual-virtual reference of charity.

From what has been said, without further discussion it appears that when John Malderus and John Wiggers interpret this passage as meaning simply that St. Thomas requires an implicit or interpretative command of charity for merit, they have not given an accurate interpretation of this text.

F. Reply to the Interpretation of Vasquez and His Followers

Most of the authors who follow Vasquez, like Vasquez himself, do not appeal too strongly to St. Thomas in support of their view. Many of them are content to appeal to the text from *De Malo*,²⁹⁹ to which we have replied. Vasquez himself also appeals to a text in the *Prima Secundae* where St. Thomas says that all that a man is and has must be ordered to God, so that every good or bad act of man has the nature of merit in the sight of God, in so far as merit pertains to the very essence of the act.³⁰⁰ This text, in view of the obligation St. Thomas imposes on all to elicit an act of charity when first coming to the use of reason, surely presents no special difficulty. For, as we have seen, once that act has been elicited, then every subsequent act is surely referred to God from the actual-virtual reference of charity. There is but one exception. In the event that one loses grace by mortal sin, St. Thomas seems to teach that it is necessary for merit that one elicit a formal act of charity, even though justified by attrition and the sacrament of Penance. Hence, with this

²⁹⁸Cf. our text, pp. 197-200.

²⁹⁹Cf. our text, pp. 239-240.

³⁰⁰*De Malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 7. Cf. Vasquez, *op. cit.*, II, Dist. 217, c. 2, n. 10, p. 587.

exception, it is perfectly true to say that every good act has the value of merit in the sight of God.

* * * *

Having answered the various interpretations alleging to be the teaching of St. Thomas, we now give our conclusion as to what St. Thomas actually taught was the reference from charity required for a meritorious act. According to the Angelic Doctor, as we understand him, every act of every virtue must be referred to God from at least an actual-virtual reference of charity due to an actual-virtual intention of charity. *De facto*, such a reference and intention of charity is always present, and *per se* will perdure indefinitely, when once a person has elicited a formal act of charity, provided the act here and now performed be not inordinate.

CONCLUSIONS

Having completed our study of the teaching of St. Thomas concerning the existence and the nature of charity as the form of the virtues, and the influx of charity required for a meritorious act, we list some general conclusions drawn from this study.

1. Charity is called the form of the virtues because it perfects not only the very habits of virtue, but also the acts of the inferior virtues, thereby constituting them meritorious acts.
2. The very habit of charity may in some manner be termed the *exemplary* form of the virtues, in that the virtues subject to it act after the manner of charity. The very habit of charity is merely the *extrinsic exemplary* form of the virtues.
3. Charity may be called the *intrinsic and essential* form of the virtues and their acts, not because it constitutes the virtues in so far as they are virtues, but in so far as the perfection left in the virtues from the act of charity commanding, constitutes the virtues as perfect virtues, and their elicited acts as meritorious acts.
4. Charity may be called the *intrinsic and essential effective* form of the virtues in that the quiddity left in the virtues from the initial formal act of charity, actually refers the elicited acts of the inferior virtues to the ultimate end from the actual-virtual intention of the end, and with an actual-virtual reference of the end.
5. The quiddity from charity is only analogously termed the form of the virtues, for it bestows a common or general form upon all the virtues, leaving untouched the specific and proper form of each virtue.
6. Charity is the form of the virtues as an operative habit really distinct from grace an entitative habit.
7. Charity is the form of the infused virtues *per modum actus*; grace is their form *per modum originis*. Grace is therefore their form as their source; charity is their form in that it commands their acts referring them to its own end.

8. Grace is the form of the acquired virtues in that it is the remote effective cause of their meritorious acts; charity is the immediate form of infused prudence, which is the immediate form of acquired prudence; acquired prudence immediately informed by infused prudence is the immediate form of the other acquired virtues.

9. In order that the acts of the inferior virtues may be meritorious they must be commanded by an actual-virtual intention of charity, and must be referred to the end with an actual-virtual reference of charity.

10. Provided some formal act of charity has preceded, this actual-virtual reference of charity is always present in every act of virtue as long as one remains in sanctifying grace. According to St. Thomas there is an obligation to elicit a formal act of charity when one first comes to the use of right reason. Once made, its causal effectiveness perdures until retracted by mortal sin.

11. Under the actual-virtual intention and reference of charity, every act of every virtue which is not inordinate becomes virtually and formally an act of charity, having a specifically diverse merit from the merit due the initial act of charity commanding, dependent always, however, on that initial act.

12. The opinions which differ from our interpretation of St. Thomas do not lack extrinsic probability. None-the-less, the interpretation we have advanced, an interpretation followed in its major outlines at least, by several eminent Dominican Commentators, seems intrinsically much more probable.

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